the Rural/Urban

EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

THE RURAL/URBAN FRINGE

A REVIEW OF SOME CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rural/urban fringe has been the subject of much discussion. No two fringe areas are exactly alike; therefore, even the definition of "rural/urban fringe" is open to debate. The perception of what constitutes a fringe area and a fringe area issue is influenced as much by the personalities of local politicians and municipal staff as by the regional, provincial/state or federal political system.

In terms of land use planning, a definition of the rural/urban fringe generally involves three factors: location, transition and conflict. A fringe area is usually defined as those lands adjacent to urban development or, but not always, to an urban municipal boundary. These lands are or will be in a state of transition - from rural to urban. The transition almost invariably involves conflict.

The conflicts or issues arising in a fringe area can relate to land use, economics, jurisdiction, politics, social attitudes and/or the environment. A survey of regional planning agencies throughout Canada and the United States revealed a wide variety of issues and attempts to resolve these issues. The regions covered by the responses ranged from the simple scenario of a medium-sized city surrounded by, and on good terms with, a predominantly agricultural municipality, to a complex collection of urban centres separated by rapidly shrinking fragments of rural land. Because of the differences in political systems and legislation, the survey responses were divided into:

(1) those from the United States and Canada (excluding Alberta);
(2) those from Alberta (excluding the Edmonton Metropolitan Region); and
(3) those from the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

From the Canadian and American responses, several broad categories, relating to fringe areas, emerged:

(1) a region with clearly defined rural and urban service areas and no formally recognized fringe;
(2) a region in which the fringe area is established as an area of urban municipal control;
(3) a region in which the fringe area is defined in a regional plan;
(4) a region in which the fringe area is defined in a joint plan or agreement; and
(5) a region in which there is little distinction between rural and urban areas and with no recognized fringe.

Few, if any, of the responding regions fit exclusively into one of the above categories.

Because of the provincial legislative framework, the regional planning areas in Alberta fall into one or more of the following three categories:

(1) regions in which the fringe area is designated in a regional plan (Edmonton Metropolitan, Calgary, Red Deer and South Peace);

(2) regions in which the fringe area is defined in a joint general municipal plan (Yellowhead, MacKenzie and, to a lesser extent, Red Deer, South Peace and Edmonton Metropolitan); and

(3) regions in which the fringe area is defined in local municipal plans and land use by-laws (Oldman River and Southeast Alberta; many municipalities in other regions also include a fringe definition in their statutory plans and/or land use by-laws.

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region is Alberta's most complex and urbanized region. Both factors - its complexity and its degree of urbanization - have resulted in a growing regional outlook among its nineteen municipalities. Although the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan defines an interim fringe boundary for each urban municipality, the City of Edmonton dominates the entire region. A two-mile wide fringe around Edmonton does not reflect the actual influence of the City on the whole Region. The Edmonton Region is, in many respects, Edmonton's unofficial fringe. Within this broad fringe area, the other fourteen urban municipalities each have a designated fringe area in the adjacent rural municipality(ies). These fringe areas are affected by the growth and development of the urban municipalities which, in turn, are affected by the City of Edmonton. Therefore, major development in and expansion into urban fringe areas is influenced by the economy of the Region and the Province. Yet local reliance on local municipal tax revenues means that each municipality, including Edmonton, is competing with eighteen other municipalities for non-residential development. In recent years, the most complex and controversial fringe area conflicts have involved tax revenue and industrial development in the Metropolitan Industrial Areas.[1]

The situation in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region suggests the need for a greater degree of joint planning at the municipal level or greater planning co-ordination at the regional level. There are nineteen separate municipal jurisdictions in a relatively small area, and fifteen fringe areas, several overlapping and all within the City of Edmonton's "area of influence". There are regional planning and regional development concerns that cross jurisdictional boundaries and affect both rural and urban boundaries. At the present time, municipalities in the Edmonton Region recognize regional concerns; however, most still regard any form of increased regional control or co-ordination as an infringement on local autonomy.

[1]These are areas, designated in the Regional Plan, which contain "... major concentrations of employment and a diverse range of industrial development, and areas required to meet major industrial land use needs of the Region," and which span urban and rural jurisdictions.

I. THE RURAL/URBAN FRINGE - CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

1. INTRODUCTION

A rural/urban fringe exists wherever urban land uses and rural land uses meet. Any urban centre has an impact, real or potential, on the surrounding rural area; the surrounding rural area has an impact, real or potential, on the urban centre. The type of impact may relate to land use, subdivision, trade area, land prices, commuting, utility servicing, future urban expansion, greenbelts and a host of other variables. The degree of impact may range from vague feelings of uncertainty to bitter conflict.

This paper focuses primarily on land use issues and issue resolution in the rural/urban fringe.

2. DEFINITION

There have been many attempts to define the rural/urban fringe, or to break it down into more specific components such as urban fringe and urban shadow. Generally speaking, any definition of the rural/urban fringe relating to land use planning emphasizes three factors: location, transition and conflict. The fringe is considered to be those rural lands surrounding an urban centre. These lands are in a state of transition, from rural uses to urban uses. Because of their transitional nature, these lands are the setting for existing or potential conflict.

This very broad, very vague definition based on a brief literature review is the basis for this report, except for Part 4 which deals with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. This report is a summary of responses to questionnaires on rural/urban fringe issues. One of the questions concerned the definition of rural/urban fringe. There was a wide variety of definitions which, considering the variety of definitions in general fringe literature, was not unexpected.

Specific definitions are based on various criteria:

(a) the political system or jurisdictional control,

(b) an arbitrarily imposed boundary,

(c) an area or boundary as defined in a regional, joint or local plan,

(d) existing or potential conflicts,

(e) the amount of undeveloped land in urban municipalities, or

(f) specific criteria or characteristics, such as population density, amount of urban development, subdivision, utility servicing, amount of open space or capability for agriculture.

In the Edmonton Region, the interim fringe area boundary designated in Policy 2.1 of the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan was used as a basis for discussion. Policy 2.1 defines the interim Fringe Area as including ". . . those lands in a rural municipality lying within 3.2 km (2.0 miles) of a corporate urban boundary."

Perhaps one reason it is difficult to define the rural/urban fringe is that it can be difficult to distinguish between "rural" and "urban". In theory, rural areas would be associated with agriculture and agricultural-related activities, and with large lot, individually serviced rural residences. Urban centres would consist of a concentration of high density residential, commercial, institutional, recreational and industrial uses with a communal utility infrastructure. In reality, political and jurisdictional boundaries often do not conform with the boundary between rural land uses and urban land uses. Many urban municipalities must cope with agricultural issues within their boundaries, while rural municipalities or regional planning agencies may have to deal with urban levels of residential, commercial or industrial development in so-called rural areas.

3. *ISSUES*

Where urban and rural land uses meet, there is existing or potential conflict. Where urban and rural land uses are separated by jurisdictional boundaries, conflicts can be intensified by poor communication, lack of trust, uncertainty, resentment towards urban expansion, resentment towards restrictions on urban expansion and the threat of annexation.

Urban fringe issues may be specific, relating to particular land uses or tax revenue, or they may be vague, relating to ideas of territory, jurisdictional control, historical settlement patterns and tradition. There are issues that are unique to fringe areas, that only arise because of certain characteristics of the land adjacent to urban centres. There are also issues that arise throughout a region, but are often intensified in the urban fringe.

Urban expansion can occur by extension of a designated urban boundary (usually when both urban and rural areas are under one jurisdiction) or by annexation (when the urban areas and the rural areas are under separate jurisdictions). Since many major urban centres are situated in areas of high agricultural capability, urban expansion often occurs at the expense of agriculture. Good agricultural land is a finite resource. Yet fringe areas are frequently regarded as future urban expansion areas, rather than permanent greenbelts. When greenbelts are established, development often "leap frogs" onto agricultural land beyond the restricted zone.

The loss of good agricultural land because of non-agricultural development is not limited to urban fringe areas. However, it tends to be intensified in the fringe. Furthermore, whereas the loss of agricultural land to natural resource extraction or recreation may be considered temporary, the loss to urban or industrial development is permanent.

Regardless of subdivision policies, land in fringe areas is fragmented by roads, powerlines, pipeline corridors and highway commercial activities, all converging on an urban centre. Loss of good agricultural land is not the only problem for agriculture. Non-agricultural uses in rural areas can reduce the viability of agricultural operations. Land fragmentation, land speculation, reduced agricultural support services and loss of farm machinery mobility can make agricultural operations economically unproductive. This is another problem not limited to the fringe. However, it is easier to resolve this issue outside the fringe area (for example, by prohibiting country residential subdivision in agriculturally viable areas) than adjacent to established urban centres, where roads, railways, pipelines and powerlines coverage and where pressures for industrial and commercial development are greatest.

Additional issues arise when rural and urban municipalities are competing for non-residential, non-agricultural development. The urban municipality may be faced with competition from cheaper, unsubdivided rural land (and sometimes, fewer development restrictions) as well as uncertainty over potential fringe development. The rural municipality faces restrictions on the type of development allowed and the threat of annexation if development does occur. The urban municipality may lose tax revenue because of rural competition; the rural municipality may lose tax revenue because of urban annexation.

Other fringe issues relate to loss of recreational open space around cities, social conflicts between rural and urban people, restrictions on natural resource extraction operations, requests for extension of urban servicing, potential for groundwater pollution from overworked septic fields and the ever-present conflict between a landowner's "right to develop" and the "common good."

The remainder of this report is a summary of responses to questions on urban fringe concepts, issues and issue resolution. Because of differences in the political system and legislative framework, the responses were divided into three groups: those from regional planning agencies in the United States and Canada (excluding Alberta), discussed in Part II; those from regional planning commissions in Alberta (excluding the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission), discussed in Part III; and those from municipalities in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, discussed in Part IV. Part V summarizes conclusions and observations based on these responses.

II. FRINGE AREA CONCEPTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

1. INTRODUCTION

Thirty-seven regional planning agencies across the United States and Canada (excluding Alberta) responded to a questionnaire on the rural/urban fringe (Table 1). The questions related to the definition or concept of the fringe, issues associated with the fringe and attempts to resolve these issues. The responses were varied and interesting. At first glance, it would appear that every one of the thirty-seven regional situations is unique and, to some extent, each is unique. However, a closer examination of the responses and

accompanying documents revealed enough similarities to suggest several rural/urban fringe categories.

TABLE 1

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

1. CANADA (EXCLUDING ALBERTA)

(a) Ontario
- the Regional Municipality of Durham
- the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk
- the Regional Municipality of Halton
- the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth
- the Regional Municipality of Niagara
- the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
- the Regional Municipality of Peel
- the Regional Municipality of Waterloo

(b) British Columbia
- the Regional District of Alberni-Clayoquot
- the Capital Regional District (Victoria)
- the Columbia Shuswap Regional District
- the Corporation of Delta
- the Regional District of East Kootenay
- the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
- the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary
- the Peace River Regional District
- the Corporation of the District of Saanich
- the Sunshine Coast Regional District
- the District of Surrey
- the Thompson-Nicola Regional District

(c) Saskatchewan
- the Prince Albert District Planning Commission
- the Rural Municipality of Corman Park

(d) Nova Scotia
- the Cape Breton Metro Planning Commission
- the Pictou County District Planning Commission

(e) Newfoundland - the St. John's Metropolitan Area Board

(f) Manitoba - Manitoba Municipal Affairs

(g) Prince Edward Island - Community and Cultural Affairs

2. THE UNITED STATES

(a) Arizona - the Maricopa Association of Governments (Phoenix)
(b) Colorado - the Denver Regional Council of Governments
(c) Georgia - the Atlanta Regional Commission
(d) Maryland - the Regional Planning Council (Baltimore)
(e) Massachusetts - the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Boston)
(f) Minnesota - the Metropolitan Council (St. Paul)
(g) Montana - the Flathead Regional Development Office (Kalispell)
(h) New Hampshire - the Lakes Regional Planning Commission (Meredith)
(i) Pennsylvania - the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (Philadelphia)
(j) Wisconsin - the Dane County Regional Planning Commission (Madison)

2. RURAL/URBAN FRINGE ISSUES

Rural/urban issues in most regions can be divided into two, very broad categories:

(a) those which are fundamentally fringe area issues, and

(b) those which affect the entire region but are intensified in the fringe area.

The first category includes: inter-municipal disputes, a lack of joint planning, restrictions on urban expansion, pressure to expand designated urban boundaries and the need for compact, orderly urban growth in conjunction with economical, efficient servicing.

The second category includes: a lack of regional co-ordination and an overall growth management strategy; inadequate land use controls; loss of prime agricultural land and pressure to allow non-agricultural development (country residential, industrial, commercial) in agricultural areas; urban sprawl, especially along highways; conflicts with agricultural operations; land speculation; servicing difficulties in rural areas; competition among municipalities for development and a stronger tax base; encroachment into recreation/open space, wildlife habitat and watersheds; and pollution or the potential for pollution.

Among the thirty-seven respondents, the most common fringe area problem mentioned was land use conflicts. However, land use conflicts are often the result of other factors, such as:

(a) a lack of any "regional" concept or growth strategy (Cape Breton Metro Planning Area, Pictou County District, the Denver Region);

(b) a legacy of non-planning (the Flathead Region in Montana);

(c) inadequate land use controls (the Delaware Valley Region, the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine);

(d) pressure from developers for cheaper rural land (the Boston Metropolitan Area, St. John's Metropolitan Area, the Delaware Valley Region, the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth);

(e) competition for development (Dane County in Wisconsin, Cape Breton Metro Planning Area, the Sunshine Coast Regional District, the Denver Region, the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth); and

(f) topographical considerations (the Regional Districts of Kootenay Boundary and Alberni-Clayoquot).

Land use conflicts may also be intensified in certain locations, such as along highways (the Delaware Valley Region, the Metropolitan Areas of Boston, St. John's and St. Paul, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and Prince Edward Island), in watershed areas (St. John's Metropolitan Area) or in areas of wildlife habitat (the Regional Municipality of Delta).

Varying degrees of pressure to expand urban boundaries is a common feature of regions where urban areas are clearly designated, even though the designated urban areas generally include undeveloped land (the Regional Municipalities of Peel, Niagara, Halton and Hamilton-Wentworth, the Regional Districts of Saanich, Surrey and Alberni-Clayoquot, the Boston Metropolitan Area). At the same time, urban expansion in some of these regions is restricted by other factors besides designated planning or servicing boundaries. For example, in British Columbia, agricultural land reserves affect urban expansion in the Municipalities of Surrey and Delta and in the Regional District of Peace River. The greenbelt around the City of Ottawa limits expansion of the City and led to the creation of three, self-sufficient (in terms of servicing) urban areas - Kanata, Orleans and Nepean - beyond the outer limits of the greenbelt.

Urban growth pressures illustrate the relationship between land use planning/urban growth management and planning for servicing. Urban sprawl or development that "leapfrogs" undeveloped areas causes problems in terms of sewer and water line sizing, "dead end" versus looped mains, incompatible servicing networks, storm water drainage and roadway patterns. The need to plan for compact and orderly urban growth to allow for economical and efficient servicing is a problem facing the Baltimore Regional Planning Area, the Atlanta Region, the Regional Districts of Kitimat-Stikine and Alberni-Clayoquot and the Regional Municipality of Peel, among others.

A number of regions are faced with servicing problems in rural areas, particularly with respect to rural settlements or country residential subdivisions (the Delaware Valley Region, the Regional Municipalities of Durham and Waterloo, the Regional Districts of East Kootenay and Peace River, the Flathead Region, the Lakes Region in New Hampshire and the St. Paul Metropolitan Area). The problems are usually associated with serviced rural settlements that are expected to grow beyond their servicing capacity or with unserviced rural residential areas that have developed to almost urban

levels of residential density. Although this can occur throughout a region, the effects in the rural/urban fringe can be:

(a) to put pressure on an urban area to extend municipal servicing;

(b) to force a rural settlement to upgrade its servicing standards to an urban level, thereby becoming an urban centre with its own rural/urban fringe; or

(c) to create servicing problems for urban expansion.

In addition to inadequate servicing, the intensification of residential development in rural areas is often a cause of pollution in watersheds or from overworked septic fields (the Flathead Region, Prince Edward Island).

Another common issue (both in the fringe and throughout the region) is the loss of good agricultural land. This can occur due to urban expansion (in fringe areas), through the development of non-agricultural land uses (which tends to be intensified in fringe areas) or through land use conflicts between agricultural activities and other land uses, especially rural residential, which make agricultural operations no longer viable (which can occur throughout the region). The Agricultural Land Reserves designation in British Columbia restricts, but does not prevent, the loss of prime agricultural land. The Regional Districts of Alberni-Clayoquot, the Sunshine Coast, Columbia Shuswap and Peace River and the Municipalities of Saanich and Delta all reported pressures to develop on, or redesignate, agricultural land reserve. The continuing loss of prime agricultural land is also a problem in the Delaware Valley Region, Dane County, the Flathead Region, the Regional Municipalities of Hamilton-Wentworth and Haldimand-Norfolk, St. John's Metropolitan Area, the St. Paul Metropolitan Area, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island.

Land use conflicts, inter-municipal disputes, loss of good agricultural land, servicing problems, land speculation, competition for development and so on can result from poor communication between urban and rural representatives. A lack of planning co-ordination between rural and urban areas characterizes the Delaware Valley Region, Dane County in Wisconsin, the Denver Region, the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, Pictou County and the Flathead Region of Montana. In the St. John's Metropolitan Area, the lack of planning co-ordination is partly the result of conflicting provincial and municipal development decisions. Some of these areas, such as the Denver and Flathead Regions, are now actively encouraging rural/urban co-operation.

By contrast, some regional agencies indicated that, with existing planning practices and joint planning documents, there are no major fringe area issues (the Prince Albert Planning District, the Rural Municipality of Corman Park, the Regional District of Thompson-Nicola and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton).

3. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND ISSUE RESOLUTION IN RURAL/URBAN FRINGE AREAS

The means by which land use and development in fringe areas is controlled are as varied as the types of fringe areas.

(a) Provincial/State Influence and Control

At the very broadest level, the province or state can affect control of fringe area development through legislation, as in Ontario, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin; through provincial subdivision regulations, as on Prince Edward Island; through ownership of public land, as in the Regional District of Port Alberni-Clayoquot; or through the designation of restricted development areas, as in British Columbia.

Provincial or state legislation can take many forms. The regional governments in Ontario were established by provincial legislation; it is these regional governments which designate rural and urban areas based on servicing standards. The Metropolitan Land Use Planning Act, part of the 1982 Minnesota Statutes, was the enabling legislation for the creation of the Metropolitan Council, the regional planning agency for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. The Province of Newfoundland established the St. John's Metropolitan Board to control the unserviced urban sprawl around the City of St. John's.

In Alberta, as will be discussed further, the Planning Act, R.S.A. 1980, enables two or more municipalities to form a joint municipal planning commission and/or adopt a joint general municipal plan. In Saskatchewan, the Planning and Development Act is the enabling legislation for the district planning process. The 1979 Manitoba Planning Act includes legislation allowing two or more municipalities to form a corporation for the purposes of planning. The Montana Codes Annotated Section 76-1-112 contains the enabling legislation which allows for the creation of joint or consolidated planning boards and the means by which rural/urban fringe issues can be resolved.

Under Montana Codes Annotated Section 76-2-310, a city or town council may extend its zoning and subdivision authority from one to three miles beyond the corporate boundary, depending on the population size and organizational structure of the urban centre. Similarly, state legislation in Wisconsin gives larger cities extraterritorial planning and subdivision approval jurisdiction for lands within three miles of the city limits. For smaller cities and unincorporated villages, this jurisdiction extends for one and one-half miles. In Colorado, a 1988 amendment to the state annexation law requires cities to prepare annexation plans for a three-mile wide fringe area. The 1982 Minnesota Statutes allows local governments, in their comprehensive plans, to designate five-year urbanization areas.

Thus, provincial or state legislation can affect the rural/urban fringe by establishing the party or parties responsible for fringe area planning and development. Provincial/state legislation can affect the fringe in other ways as well. In Dane County, Wisconsin, the Regional Development Guide designates the urban service

areas which, under state law, are the only areas which can receive urban sewer servicing. In Canada, provincial subdivision regulations may be used to control aspects of fringe development, such as highway commercial or country residential. For example, on Prince Edward Island, in areas where no official plan has been adopted, provincial regulations control subdivision along highways and within one mile of towns and villages. Similarly, the Subdivision Regulation in Alberta prohibits new multi-parcel country residential subdivisions within certain distances of cities, towns and villages. In Ontario, the 1976 Agricultural Code of Practice establishes separation distances between farm operations and new development, to allow farm operations to remain viable and to reduce land use conflicts.

The 1980 Minnesota Statutes allows land to be assessed at agricultural, not development, value. Under the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Program, landowners can be protected from urban assessments, nuisance claims and residential development if the land is kept in agricultural use for a minimum period of eight years.

Some regions felt that the senior governments (federal or provincial/state) should play a greater planning role. For example, the Regional Municipality of Peel included the lack of ". . . strong senior government policy relative to development of prime foodland" as a major fringe (and regional) issue. In spite of regional government and regional control of servicing, estate residential and commercial developments are being built in areas of Class 1, 2 and 3 soils. The Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk felt that the more restrictive policies being proposed by the province, for example with respect to rural residential lots, was one means of resolving fringe area problems. The response from the Denver Regional Council of Governments in Colorado suggested that state legislation, with respect to a fringe area concept or an extraterritorial planning area for cities, could help clarify and resolve some fringe area issues.

Public lands and provincial or state designated reserves can be an important factor in controlling fringe area development, for example, by restricting urban expansion in certain directions. Public lands and reserves are usually associated with natural resources considered to have provincial/state, rather than regional or local, importance. Such natural resources can include: forest lands, scenic areas, wildlife habitat, prime agricultural lands and specialized crop growing areas.

In the Regional District of Alberni-Clayoquot, neither the City of Port Alberni nor the Regional District can exercise land use control over areas deemed to be in the provincial (British Columbia) interest. This can cause problems, for example, where Tree Farm Licence lands border on the municipal boundary. The "clear cut" logging practices which are allowed on Tree Farm lands are not compatible with residential development.

A portion of the fringe area surrounding the City of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, lies within the Nisbet Provincial Forest. Although the Forest lands are under the rural municipalities' land use by-laws, the province's Department of Parks and

Renewable Resources has prepared a Land Management Plan for the area. This plan provides the basis for land use decisions within the Nisbet Provincial Forest.

In the Maricopa Region, Arizona, state-owned land outside the urban area is exchanged for privately-owned but still undeveloped land within the urban area. The intent of this exchange is to conserve some open space in a metropolitan area where many distinct urban centres already abut one another. In a situation similar to that of Edmonton and St. Albert, several urban centres around Phoenix are separated by the width of a roadway right-of-way.

In 1972, the British Columbia Agricultural Land Reserve Act established Agricultural Land Reserves (ALR's). This Act designates areas of prime agricultural land as a provincial resource, controls both use and subdivision within its jurisdiction and takes precedence over local jurisdiction.

The impact of such a restricted development designation on any particular fringe area will depend on how much of that fringe falls within the reserve category. For example, the Municipality of the Corporation of Delta comprises three distinct urban areas separated by agricultural reserve lands. There is no legal definition of a fringe; in terms of urban expansion, there is no fringe and the boundary between urban and rural areas is a legislative one based on the agricultural reserve land legislation. A major issue in this municipality is the provision of sufficient urban land. This has created pressure to develop on agricultural land; at the same time, the urban areas are examining alternatives such as increasing urban density and revitalizing older areas. Pressure to use good agricultural land for non-agricultural uses is also an issue in the Peace River Regional District where most communities are surrounded by agricultural land reserve. In the District of Saanich, there are areas of Agricultural Land Reserve within the Urban Containment Boundary as established by the Corporation of the District of Saanich. The Saanich Council actively supports the Agricultural Land Reserve Act, but finds it difficult to maintain agricultural uses on pockets of Agricultural Land Reserve surrounded by urban uses. In the District of Surrey, where the fringe is considered the transition area between urban and agricultural land uses, most of the agricultural land is designated Agricultural Land Reserve. The fringe or "Suburban" area is meant to provide a buffer between urban and agricultural uses. Since little or no development can occur on Agricultural Reserve, there is pressure to expand the urban boundary by redesignating Suburban land to Urban land.

The degree to which public land and reserve designations in the fringe control development depends to a large extent on the intent and commitment of the provincial or state government. For example, if the government is adamant that prime agricultural land be preserved, it will resist pressure - whether private, municipal or regional - to permit urban development on these lands. For an urban municipality surrounded by prime agricultural land, the effects are enormous; for all intents and purposes, a fringe area for urban expansion does not exist.

If the provincial or state government is not committed to its public lands and reserve policies, the result may be haphazard development, as developers and local governments put pressure on the government to (i) allow non-conforming development or (ii) re-designate or redistrict the land in question. The greatest pressure for development is almost always in the rural/urban fringe.

(b) Regional Influence and Control

Regional control of sewer and water servicing essentially means regional control of land use outside developed urban areas. In regional or development plans, urban areas are clearly delineated. With minor exceptions, urban standards of servicing are restricted to designated urban areas (both developed and undeveloped). Rural areas are defined as lands in which servicing must be provided on an individual private basis. This affects lot size, since any lot must be sufficiently large to support a septic field; number of lots, since the quantity of potable water is fixed; and development, since urban land uses require urban levels of servicing.

Urban servicing boundaries are usually designated in a regional plan or development guide. The Official Regional Plans for the Ontario Municipalities of Peel, Ottawa-Carleton, Waterloo, Durham, Halton and Hamilton-Wentworth establish limits for extension of urban services. The Official Plan for the District of Saanich designates both an Urban Containment Boundary and a Sewer Enterprise Boundary. The Regional Development Guide for Dane County, Wisconsin, shows urban service areas, where sewer services will be provided. The Metropolitan Development Guide for the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area defines a Metro Urban Service Area.

Most regions in which servicing is controlled by a regional government or commission (as in Ontario) do not define a rural/urban fringe, at least in terms of land use. However, many do experience fringe problems. Within the urban boundary, there are conflicts between urban types of development and existing agricultural activities. Prime agricultural land may be lost to production either directly, through premature urban development, or indirectly, through restrictions on agricultural operations. Some lands within the urban servicing boundary may prove too difficult or too costly to service. In the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, rural estate development is now permitted on "unserviceable" city lands, providing direct competition for designated rural settlement areas. Outside the urban boundary, there is pressure to either expand the servicing boundary or allow higher density residential, institutional or highway commercial uses on adjacent, less expensive rural land. Thus, incompatible land uses, pressures for urban levels of servicing, loss of prime agricultural land and land speculation are issues that arise at the rural/urban interface. However, these issues are likely to be more intense within an urban servicing boundary than at the boundary between designated (existing and potential) urban lands and designated rural lands.

Regional official community or district plans provide policies relating to other aspects of fringe development besides servicing. Regional plans may designate hamlet boundaries, establish policy areas for different types of agriculture, limit

country (estate) residential development to specific areas, preserve environmentally sensitive lands and set out locational criteria for agricultural and non-agricultural industry. For example, the Regional Plan for Haldimand-Norfolk delineates hamlet boundaries and prescribes population limits. The Niagara Regional Policy Plan designates four rural policy areas based on such factors as climate, soils, terrain and type of crop(s). The Durham Official Regional Plan designates Permanent Agricultural Reserve Lands, a very restrictive designation, and General Agricultural Lands, where agricultural industry and the farming community are given priority. The Regional Plan for the Regional Municipality of Waterloo recognizes five Settlement Policy Areas, ranging from "rural" lands to the downtown cores of regional urban centres. In the Regional Municipalities of Peel and Haldimand-Norfolk, the establishment of new estate residential subdivisions requires an amendment to the Regional Official Plan. Planning Guidelines adopted by the Prince Albert District Planning Commission prohibit new country residential subdivisions with a half-mile of Prince Albert.

Regional plans may cover a whole region, both urban and rural lands (as in Ontario) or they may provide policy direction for unincorporated lands only (as in East Kootenay, Port Alberni-Clayoquot and the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia and the St. John's Metropolitan Area in Newfoundland). A regional plan (such as those for the Regional Districts of Surrey and East Kootenay) may designate specific fringe areas, prescribe permitted and discretionary uses, restrict lot size(s) and require a formal amendment when changes are proposed.

The designations -- "urban," "rural" and specific policy areas -- are intended to guide each type of development to the best location. Urban expansion should occur only where urban levels of servicing can be efficiently and economically provided. Rural residential subdivisions should occur in areas of poor agricultural soil and appropriate terrain. Noxious heavy industry should locate away from population centres. Natural resources, such as prime agricultural land, forests, wildlife habitat and mineral aggregates, should be preserved for the common good of the region.

Most regional planning areas have a regional plan or development guide. Most regional planning agencies felt that a regional plan, development guide or overall growth management strategy was a key element in resolving fringe area issues. However, for a regional plan to be effective in controlling development at the rural/urban interface, it must:

(i) provide clear policy directions with respect to urban and rural development, and

(ii) be part of a hierarchy of plans in which all local plans and zoning regulations are required to conform to the regional plan.

Conflicts can arise when policy directions are not clear. For example, in the Regional Municipality of Durham, some lands adjacent to major urban areas are designated as Permanent Agricultural Reserve (a very restrictive category) as well as for future urban development. Regional Plan policies for the Regional

Municipality of Waterloo are intended to promote rural residential growth in existing serviced communities. Yet regional policies also allow unserviced rural settlement areas or clusters of non-farm residences to qualify for settlement status. In recent years, the bulk of rural residential growth in Waterloo has occurred in unserviced rural settlements. Only two of the six serviced communities have been a focus for township (rural) growth.

Where conformity is not a requirement, as in the Delaware Valley Region, the regional plan has little authority as a planning document. Some areas have recently recognized the importance of regional co-ordination and planning. New Jersey has proposed a state plan dealing with the co-ordination of growth and infrastructure. Georgia recently passed state-wide legislation requiring co-ordinated planning at the state, regional and local levels. Other areas, such as British Columbia, may have taken a "step backwards" by abolishing regional planning. Since 1983, British Columbia has had no mechanism in place to deal with common or regional issues among municipal and regional districts. However, within each municipality, rural/urban fringe issues are addressed in an official plan or through rural/urban negotiations. In some regions, such as the Cape Breton Metro Planning Area and the Pictou County District, attempts at regional planning are generally resented by the population and inter-municipal conflict appears to be more common than inter-municipal co-operation.

(c) Local Control

Regional plans normally provide policy direction. The actual implementation of these policies is often left to local governments. However, the degree to which local governments exercise control over fringe areas varies. Under a regional government, both urban and rural municipalities must operate within the larger context of regional plan policy. The regional plan designates certain districts for certain types of land use; local plans refine the district boundaries. The regional plan sets out policies for each land use district; local plans and regulations put these policies into action.

At the other end of the scale, local governments may have almost complete planning jurisdiction, as in the Delaware Valley Region, where local zoning ordinances are the major means of controlling fringe development, and regional and county policies are often ignored; or in the Boston Metropolitan Area, where most development control is in the hands of local planning boards; or in the Denver Region, where urban development in rural areas depends on the whim of each county.

In between these two extremes is a variety of situations. Development in the rural/urban fringe may be controlled through joint planning between rural and urban municipalities. Joint planning is a feature of the Prince Albert District, the Rural Municipality of Corman Park (surrounding Saskatoon), parts of the Denver Region (out of necessity) and in the Flathead Region of Montana (City-County Planning Boards).

In regions where unincorporated rural areas are represented by a regional planning agency, control of fringe development requires a co-operative effort between the regional agency and the urban municipality. This occurs in British Columbia (for example, in the Regional Districts of Kootenay Boundary, East Kootenay and Port Alberni-Clayoquot) and in the St. John's Metropolitan Area in Newfoundland. In Kootenay Boundary, for example, official plans and implementing zoning and subdivision by-laws are prepared and adopted by a joint rural/urban Regional District Board of Directors.

Joint planning provides a mechanism for resolving fringe issues. The process can force municipalities to plan for the future and to share their interests and concerns. Responses from the Saskatchewan planning agencies indicated that, with joint plans in place, there are no longer any major fringe area issues. At the same time, both situations involve a medium-sized city surrounded by predominantly agricultural land. In more complex regions, such as Denver, Colorado, and Flathead, Montana, joint planning and intergovernmental agreements are the first step towards resolving long-standing rural/urban fringe issues. Manitoba Municipal Affairs feels that the formation of planning districts (for joint rural/urban planning) has had very positive results. Where joint planning between urban and rural municipalities has been encouraged, major fringe issues, such as boundary conflicts, land use conflicts, loss of prime agricultural land and restriction of urban growth by incompatible development, have been significantly reduced.

In the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, fringe area issues are largely a result of topography rather than jurisdiction or administration. Each fringe area has a joint planning program which includes plans and by-laws. Joint planning allows all interests -- rural, urban and provincial -- to be taken into account in fringe area planning. The Regional District of East Kootenay, by encouraging joint planning and negotiation, was able to resolve a contentious issue -- the definition of the fringe -- between the City of Cranbrook and the rural population. To quote the Director of Planning for the Regional District of East Kootenay ". . . in defining the urban/rural fringe . . . it is crucial to have the interested parties sit down and define their interests and ensure that everyone involved knows what everyone elses' interests are. Defining a complex urban/rural interface is not an academic planning exercise; [it is] a process of defining interests, negotiating and looking for creative solutions."

Joint planning is based on co-operation and trust between municipalities. Where trust is lacking or the need for co-operation is not perceived, voluntary joint planning, it appears, is unlikely to happen.

Another form of co-operation between rural and urban areas is the process of referral. The "Fringe Areas Policy Paper" adopted for the Thompson-Nicola Regional District requires applications for rezoning, development permits or amendments to official settlement plans in the fringe area (as defined in the Paper) to be referred to the urban municipality for consideration. However, the Regional District is not bound by the urban municipality's recommendations. Regular consultation with municipalities is a feature of the Peace River Regional District.

In the Sunshine Coast Regional District, the preparation of community plans includes referral to an adjacent municipality for comment and input.

The most basic and detailed level of fringe area control is the land use by-law or zoning restrictions. Rural municipalities (or the representative regional district) are the usual authorities for preparing and amending zoning by-laws for fringe areas. The preparation and amendment processes may be done in consultation with the adjacent urban municipality (as in the Regional Districts of Thompson-Nicola and East Kootenay, in the Flathead Region of Montana, in the Prince Albert Planning District and the Rural Municipality of Corman Park, Saskatchewan). In some areas, for example Manitoba and the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, zoning by-laws are prepared jointly by the rural and urban municipalities.

In some cases, local land use control is practically non-existent. Regional planning agencies for areas ranging from the highly urbanized, highly developed Delaware Valley Region to the resource-dominated Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine to the economically-depressed, but independently-minded Pictou County District and Cape Breton Metro Planning Area consider a "lack of land use control" as a major fringe (indeed a major regional) issue.

Generally speaking, subdivision and zoning authority for urban areas rests with urban governments and in rural areas, with rural governments or planning agencies. However, certain provinces and states give an urban municipality the authority to control land use and/or subdivision in an area beyond its boundaries. In Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg was given planning and development control of the "Additional Zone," those lands surrounding and within thirty to thirty-five kilometres of the City. Since the Additional Zone was created in the 1970s, most municipalities have withdrawn from this Zone and the remainder are expected to do so. The loss of planning control was resented by the municipalities. The Additional Zone is gradually evolving into a series of joint rural/urban municipal planning districts.

In the United States, several states allow cities and towns extraterritorial control of land use and subdivision. State legislation in Wisconsin gives larger cities extraterritorial planning and subdivision approval jurisdiction over lands within three miles of the city limits. For smaller cities and unincorporated villages, this jurisdiction extends for one-and-a-half miles. In the Flathead Region of Montana, one method of development control in the urban fringe is the extension of municipal zoning by a city council beyond the city limits. A city or town council may extend its zoning and subdivision authority from one to three miles beyond the corporate boundary, depending on the population size and organizational structure of the urban municipality.

Land use control in fringe areas often takes the form of restrictive agricultural districts. (This is a common feature of rural land use by-laws in Alberta.) Prince Albert District and the Rural Municipality of Corman Park deliberately zone much of the land around Prince Albert and Saskatoon respectively as agricultural. In areas where urban development in the fringe is already established, rural

municipalities or regional planning authorities (or urban municipalities with extraterritorial zoning control) may establish land use regulations to limit further development or subdivision, to control development density, to protect special areas (prime agricultural land, recreation/open space, wild life habitat) and to direct new development to the best possible location.

4. *URBAN FRINGE CATEGORIES OR "MODELS"*

In theory, the ideal fringe area model would consist of a compact urban centre with full urban services and a clearly defined boundary (Figure 1). This would be surrounded by a designated fringe area encompassing sufficient land for urban expansion for the foreseeable future, with little or no development other than extensive agriculture and, preferably, with poorer quality soils. Beyond this fringe area, rural land uses would predominate. Where such an ideal fringe area exists, it is likely to be associated with small urban centres in large, predominantly agricultural areas. (In fact, this ideal fringe exists to some extent in parts of the Edmonton Region.)

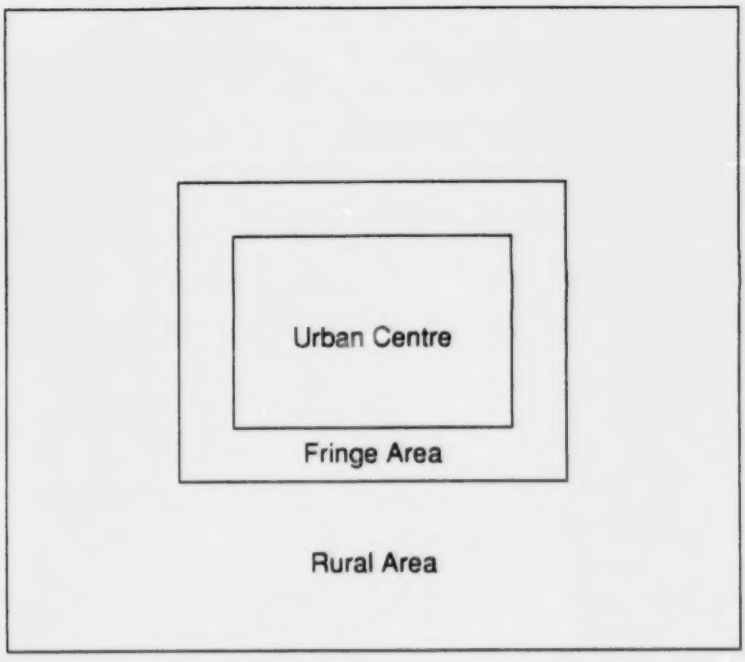
That this ideal fringe situation is rare in the more settled parts of North America is the result of many factors -- historical, economic, political, social and physical. For example, in Canada most large urban centres are located in areas of good agricultural land.[2] In many places, the existing settlement pattern was established long before the need for long-term planning was recognized. Many urban municipalities experience periods of economic boom and bust, necessitating revisions to their urban growth projections. Social trends, such as those relating to residence and lifestyle preferences, change over time. Improvements in transportation, both the means and the network, and even fluctuations in the world price of oil, affect development in both urban and non-urban areas. Government policy can encourage or restrict development around urban centres.

Generally speaking, the thirty-seven regions for which information was provided fit into one or more of the following fringe "models."

(a) A region with clearly defined rural and urban service areas and no recognized fringe.

This type of situation normally occurs under a regional government and/or with regional control of the servicing infrastructure. The region is characterized by one or more urban areas clearly defined, in a regional plan, by an established boundary for existing and future urban servicing (Figure 2). Within the urban boundary, regional utility services are, or will be, provided. Beyond the urban boundary, development is limited to that which can be privately and individually serviced. Although there is undeveloped, agricultural land within the urban boundary and some urban-type development outside the urban boundary, there is a clear

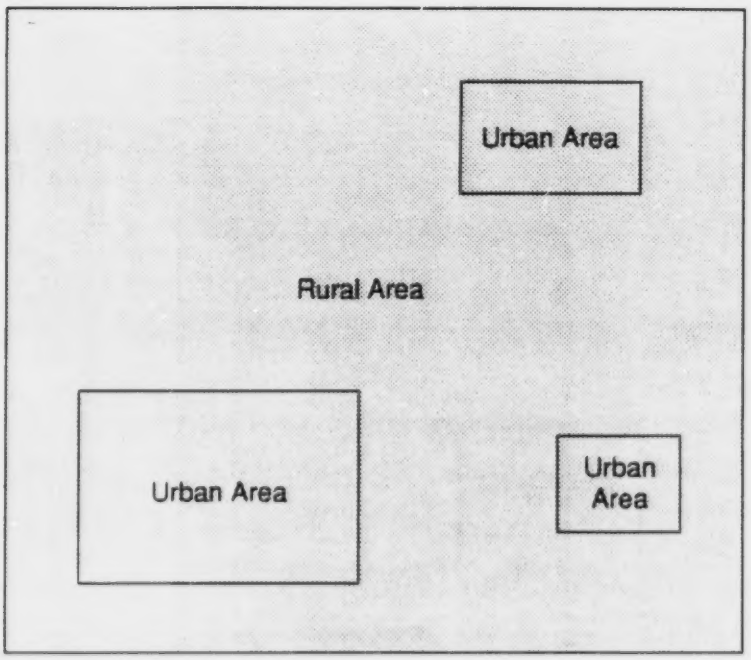
[2]Russwurm, Lorne H. Surroundings of Our Cities: Problems and Planning Implications Of Urban Fringe Landscapes, Ottawa, Community Planning Press, 1977.



Urban Centre	• compact existing urban development
Fringe Area	• future urban expansion area (interim land use - extensive agriculture)
Rural Area	• predominantly agricultural and agricultural-related development

Figure 1

THE 'IDEAL' FRINGE AREA MODEL



▭	• under regional planning
Urban Area	• designated area for existing and future urban servicing
Rural Area	• private, individual servicing only • may include restricted agricultural areas

Figure 2

REGIONAL CONTROL OF SERVICING

distinction made between rural and urban roles within the region. Designated urban areas are, or will be, developed to urban standards of servicing, residential density, commercial variety and so on. Rural areas are intended for agriculture, with some rural residential and agricultural service industry development.

This type of regional planning area has no recognized fringe area and, therefore, no regional policies relating to a rural/urban fringe. Urban expansion is expected to be contained within designated urban servicing boundaries.

Regional municipalities in Ontario, such as Ottawa-Carleton, Peel, Halton, Waterloo, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara and Hamilton-Wentworth, are good examples of this fringe area category. These are regions where regional governments, with regional control of utility and transportation services, are currently in place.

In the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area, the Metropolitan Council has separated the region into the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (where metropolitan investments, especially sewer and highways, will be made) and the Rural Service Area (where the preservation of agriculture and the rural character is encouraged).

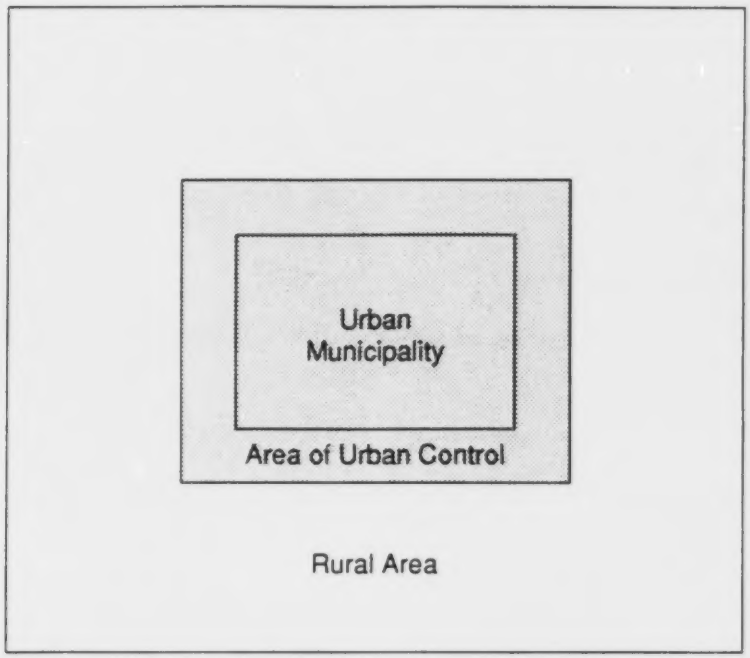
(b) A region in which the fringe area is established as an area of urban municipal control.

In this type of situation, an urban municipality has land use planning and subdivision authority over lands adjacent to, but outside the corporate urban boundary (Figure 3). In terms of land use planning and urban expansion, these lands would be considered as the urban fringe.

A Canadian example is Winnipeg's "Additional Zone." In the Maricopa Metropolitan Area in Arizona, urban municipalities can plan within a "strip annexation area"; this is land, adjacent to but outside existing urban boundaries, which will eventually become urban. Montana and Wisconsin give cities and towns extraterritorial planning and subdivision authority.

(c) A region in which the fringe area is defined in a regional plan.

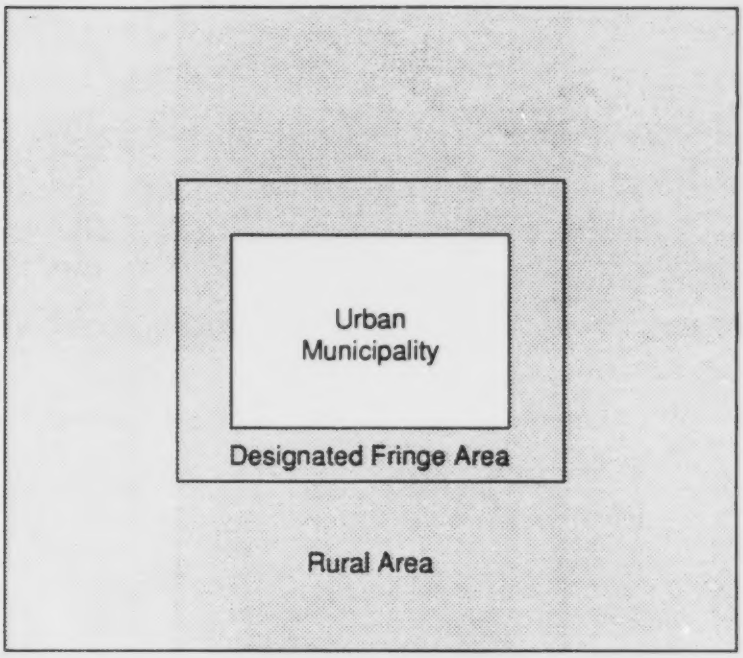
These are regions in which the rural/urban fringe is designated in a regional plan or similar document, usually in terms of a certain distance or distances from an urban municipality's incorporated limits (Figure 4). (Alberta has some of the best examples of this type of fringe category.) In British Columbia, the Thompson-Nicola Regional District adopted a special planning study entitled "Fringe Areas Policy Paper." This paper defines fringe areas in the Regional District as five kilometres from the boundaries of an urban municipality having a population of more than 10,000 (the City of Kamloops) and two kilometres from the boundaries of an urban municipality having a population of less than 10,000. The Official Community Plan for the Corporation of the District of Saanich identifies the rural/urban fringe as the area between the Urban Containment Boundary (the present limit for urban expansion) and the Sewer Enterprise Boundary (which



	• under urban planning
Urban Municipality	• urban development within an incorporated urban boundary
Area of Urban Control	• area over which the urban municipality has development and/or subdivision control
Rural Area	• agricultural and agricultural-related development • may include restricted agricultural areas

Figure 3

URBAN CONTROL OF THE FRINGE AREA



	• under rural planning
Urban Municipality	• urban development within an incorporated urban boundary
Designated Fringe Area	• defined within a regional plan - on a map and/or in the text (eg: all lands within a certain distance of an urban municipality's incorporated boundary)
Rural Area	• generally agricultural

Figure 4

REGIONAL PLAN FRINGE DESIGNATION

defines the area which is sewered or capable of being serviced within five years). At the present time, the two Boundaries are almost coincidental and the fringe area, as defined, has almost disappeared. The Official Community Plan for the District of Surrey defines the urban fringe as "Suburban", a transition area between urban and agricultural uses.

(d) A region in which the fringe area is defined in a joint plan or agreement.

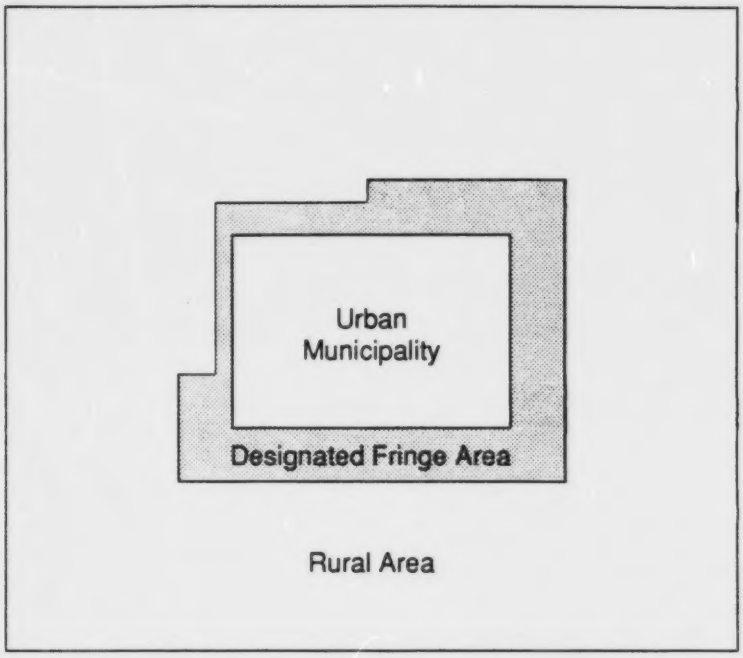
In this situation, the urban fringe comprises those lands adjacent to an urban municipality and recognized as the fringe, usually by designation in a joint plan or land use by-law, by the urban and rural municipalities (Figure 5). The actual area designated as a fringe will depend on a number of factors, including topography, agricultural soil capability, directions of urban growth, transportation patterns, existing and potential development and political considerations. The fringe may be considered a future expansion area; an area of rural/urban, urban/rural impact; or both. For example, an urban municipality, anticipating growth beyond its present boundaries, may wish to ensure that suitable and sufficient land will be available to accommodate future expansion. Where an urban municipality has a long-term supply of undeveloped land within its boundaries, the municipality may wish to ensure that permanent development outside its boundaries will not impinge on future urban development; similarly, the rural municipality may wish to ensure that future urban development will not hamper adjacent agricultural activities.

(In Alberta, joint fringe area planning is generally encouraged.) In Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon and the surrounding Rural Municipality of Corman Park have a contractual agreement recognizing a fringe area which ranges between two and five miles from the City's corporate limits. The City of Prince Albert and the Rural Municipalities of Prince Albert and Buckland generally consider those lands within a half-mile of the City's boundaries as the rural/urban fringe.

In the Regional District of East Kootenay, British Columbia, joint planning and negotiation between the Regional District (representing the rural population) and the City of Cranbrook resolved the issue of a fringe area definition. The City wanted veto authority over land use decisions within six kilometres of the city limits. This was totally unacceptable to the rural residents. The final result of rural/urban negotiations was a two-tier fringe: lands adjacent to the City and required to accommodate a projected ten-year population growth, and lands beyond the urban expansion area, where the City had some concerns.

(e) A region in which there is little distinction between rural and urban areas and with no recognized fringe.

These are regions usually characterized by urban sprawl. In some areas, this situation is a result of large-scale urbanization and historic patterns of growth. For example the Delaware Valley Region, a bi-state (Pennsylvania and New Jersey), nine-county region, contains 352 municipalities. Urban centres range in size from rural villages to the City of Philadelphia. The development of the automobile and a major highway system has resulted in urban sprawl. With land use and



	• joint planning area
Urban Municipality	• existing urban development
Designated Fringe Area	• area recognized in a joint general municipal plan as a fringe area and/or urban expansion area
Rural Area	• predominantly agricultural and agricultural-related development

Figure 5

JOINT GENERAL MUNICIPAL PLAN FRINGE DESIGNATION

development firmly under local jurisdiction, there is little regional planning and no recognition of a rural/urban fringe.

In the heavily urbanized Denver Region, there is no specific fringe area concept. Some counties encourage urban growth in unincorporated areas; others direct growth towards the cities. Annexation of fringe land around cities is common; annexation plans are rare. Because there is no overall regional growth concept, most cities vie with each other and with unincorporated urban centres for development, or annex land to prevent incompatible development in an adjacent county.

Conversely, urban sprawl may result from a lack of development. For example, the Cape Breton Metro Planning Area has experienced so little growth over the last thirty years that any development in any location would be welcomed.

A lack of fringe area recognition and planning may also result from local attitudes. Historically entrenched ideas of local jurisdiction may hinder attempts at regional planning. Strong resistance, on the part of local governments and the general population, towards higher-level government policy regulations is a characteristic of such regions as the Pictou County District and the Cape Breton Metro Planning Area (both in Nova Scotia) and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine in British Columbia.

Where the natural environment has a major impact on development potential, it may be difficult to define a rural/urban fringe and to control fringe area development. For example, the mountainous terrain in the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary encourages ribbon development along valley highways and restricts urban expansion where there are steep slopes, rivers and so on. Urban and non-urban development is confined to a small area; there is no room to preserve an urban fringe. In Pictou County, good agricultural land is scarce. Lands are perceived to have little agricultural or resource value and are merely awaiting development. Therefore, it becomes difficult to allow development in one location and refuse development in another location.

Few regional planning areas fit exclusively into one of these fringe models. The real world is rarely so neat. The concept (or lack) of a rural/urban fringe is a response to local conditions: existing urban sprawl, availability of prime agricultural land, political and social attitudes, terrain, cost of servicing, intergovernmental co-operation, historical development and other factors.

5. *SUMMARY*

In summary, the regional planning agencies which responded to the questionnaire are in themselves an attempt to resolve regional - including fringe - issues. Almost all regional planning areas are experiencing rural/urban fringe problems. This is true even where, in theory, a rural/urban fringe does not exist, or where the entire region is part of a larger fringe. Most agencies recognized the need for an overall regional

development strategy. Most agencies also recognized the importance of rural/urban planning co-ordination, either through an umbrella organization (e.g. a regional government) or through joint planning at the local municipal level.

III. THE URBAN FRINGE CONCEPT IN ALBERTA

1. INTRODUCTION

The Province of Alberta is characterized by vast expanses of rural land (both agricultural and non-agricultural) punctuated by designated, generally well-defined, urban centres. With some exceptions, the urban areas are distinct, both from the rural areas and from other urban centres. Where urban boundaries meet, individual city or town identities are fiercely protected.

The relative lack of urban sprawl in Alberta is due to a number of factors:

(a) the origin of many towns and villages as agricultural service centres in an area of extensive agriculture;

(b) the location of urban centres spaced out along the relatively few major transportation routes;

(c) the relatively recent growth of many urban centres and country residential subdivisions, particularly with respect to planning legislation (such as the 1978 Subdivision Regulation);

(d) the recognition of a rural/urban fringe concept and the incorporation of this concept into regional and local plans and land use by-laws; and

(e) the existence of both urban and rural municipalities, with local governments that protect local interests but, at the same time, can co-operate with each other on an equal basis.

At the same time, some of these same factors give rise to other fringe area problems. Many urban centres are located in areas of good agricultural land (Canada Land Inventory Soil Classes 1, 2 and 3) or in areas of viable agricultural activities. All too often, the expansion of an urban centre means the loss of good agricultural land.

The highways, such as the Calgary Trail (Highway 2) and the TransCanada (Highway 1), act as magnets for industrial and highway commercial development, particularly near cities and towns.

Although new multi-parcel country residential subdivision is prohibited within a certain distance of a city, town or village, infilling of existing subdivisions is allowed. Country residential development beyond a designated fringe area still has an impact on both urban and rural municipalities. For the urban centre, there is the use of facilities and

services by non-rate payers. With continued growth, urban boundaries may eventually incorporate country residential subdivisions, creating problems with lot size, servicing and roads. For the rural municipalities, there are conflicts with agricultural operations, demands for services (both hard and soft) and the potential for pollution.

While urban and rural municipalities can co-operate on an equal basis, they can also compete for non-residential development on an equal basis.

2. *LEGISLATION*

In order to understand the fringe area concept in Alberta, it is necessary to examine the legislation which has influenced rural and urban development. Legislation in Alberta as it relates to land use planning is often described as a hierarchy of plans. At the local level are the municipal statutory plans and regulations - the general municipal plan, the joint general municipal plan, the land use by-law, etc. These plans and regulations must conform with a regional plan which in turn must conform with the provincial planning act. This hierarchy, from local land use by-laws to provincial statutes, has an impact on fringe area planning. Any provincial or regional policies affecting the rural/urban fringe must be taken into account by local governments.

The Planning Act, R.S.A. 1980, is the enabling legislation which allows regional planning commissions, municipal councils, municipal planning commissions and joint municipal planning commissions to exercise some measure of control over land use and development in the rural/urban fringe. The Planning Act provides for the establishment of regional planning commissions and sets out their responsibilities. The Act also establishes the purpose of a regional plan and requires conformity to regional plan policies (including fringe area policies) from local by-laws, statutory plans, development, replotting, etc. Appendix A summarizes the sections of the Planning Act which affect, directly or indirectly, planning in the rural/urban fringe.

While the Planning Act does not include specific fringe area policies, the provincial Subdivision Regulation (Alberta Regulation 132/78) has had a direct impact on the rural/urban fringe. The Subdivision Regulation provides more detailed regulations regarding subdivision in general and subdivision in fringe areas. Section 20 states that, unless otherwise permitted in a regional plan, subdivision for country residential use is prohibited unless it is:

(a) five miles or more from the boundaries of a city, town or new town having a population of 5,000 or more persons,

(b) two miles or more from the boundaries of a city, town, new town or village having a population of 1,000 or more but less than 5,000 persons, or

(c) one mile or more from the boundaries of a town, village or summer village having a population of less than 1,000 persons.

Highway commercial development is also prohibited within five miles, measured along the highway or the intersection of a highway, from the nearest direct public roadway to a city, town, new town, village or summer village.

The Subdivision Regulation regulates distance between residential land/development and landfills or sewage treatment facilities; minimum lot sizes with respect to utility servicing; maximum lot size for country residential use; and siting of country residential development on poor agricultural land. The Regulation also establishes, as a right, the subdivision of a developed or undeveloped country residential parcel from an unsubdivided quarter section.

The Subdivision Regulation does not, however, address industrial development in either urban or rural areas.

Section 6(1) (n.1) requires referral of subdivision applications, to the regional planning commission, for areas where the commission is not the subdivision approving authority. This gives the commission an opportunity to comment on, and if necessary appeal, a subdivision proposal.

Regional planning commissions play a major role in fringe area planning. Section 26(3) of the Planning Act, R.S.A. 1980, defines the responsibilities of a regional planning commission. A regional planning commission shall:

(a) prepare a regional plan. The plan can include policies on land use and development, the rural/urban fringe, mediation in inter-municipal disputes, etc.;

(b) as requested, assist a municipality in the preparation of a statutory plan or land use by-law. In this way, the commission has direct input into the municipal legislation which will direct land use and development at the local level. The commission can also assist in the preparation of joint general municipal plans;

(c) as requested, provide advice and assistance to municipalities on any agreed subject, including fringe area planning and inter-municipal co-operation. The Commission can mediate in inter-municipal disputes;

(d) as requested, comment on annexation applications with respect to such matters as the need for urban expansion, the conservation of good agricultural land, the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, and so on;

(e) as requested, speak to a matter at a Local Authorities Board hearing, which could include appeals relating to annexation or subdivision in fringe areas.

In Alberta, a regional plan provides for the present and future land use and development of the planning region. A regional plan may also regulate and control the use and development of land in the planning region.

In the 1982 Alberta Planning Board Decision Report "Framework for Application of Regional Plan Guidelines," the urban fringe was considered one of the subject areas of importance to most regional plans. To provide for the logical and orderly conversion of land from rural to urban uses, regional plans were to set criteria for local general municipal plans and to encourage the preparation of joint general municipal plans.

The implementation of regional plan fringe policies and the actual control of fringe area development rests with the rural municipalities. In Alberta, at the provincial level, the urban fringe refers to rural land only; once land is incorporated within an urban boundary, the land is considered urban. To some, this appears unjust. Urban and rural municipalities are equal entities under the Planning Act. Yet the urban fringe, as considered in a regional plan (based on provincial guidelines) is land in a rural municipality which should be reserved for future urban expansion. There is no corresponding "rural" fringe within urban boundaries. Some rural municipalities, therefore, resent the implication that rural areas are merely land banks for future urban expansion.

The existing Planning Act considers urban and rural municipalities as equals, but does not define urban and rural roles. In some provinces and states, the definition of "urban" and "rural" is directly related to existing and potential utility servicing. In Alberta, the boundary between urban land uses with urban levels of service and rural land uses with rural levels of service is established by the municipal governments of the adjoining municipalities. Only in the case of a dispute does the Province arbitrarily designate a boundary. Regional plan policies are intended to encourage municipalities to direct urban development to established urban centres. However, the definition of what is "urban" and what is "rural" is sometimes a matter of debate. Unlike regional plans, for example, in Ontario, the plans for each of Alberta's regional planning areas were not intended to allocate growth to specific locations. With the exception of the Calgary Region, the only direct control the regional planning commissions exercise in fringe areas is with respect to subdivision on good agricultural land.

One other piece of provincial legislation which has a direct impact on the rural/urban fringe is the Municipal Government Act. This Act defines a "municipality" as a city, town, village, summer village or municipal district.[3]

The Municipal Government Act authorizes the Local Authorities Board, on request, to order the annexation of territory from a municipality to an improvement district, special area or another municipality or from an improvement district or special area to a municipality. A municipal council or the Minister may petition for annexation. Every annexation order of the Local Authorities Board must be approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by order, annex territory when no annexation petition has been made.

[3]The Planning Act, R.S.A., 1980 includes "county" in its definition of "municipality." Counties come under The County Act, rather than the Municipal Government Act.

When annexation occurs, all property, rights, assets and liabilities pass from the "old" municipality to the "new" municipality. All taxes due, once collected, are reimbursed to the old municipality. The Minister may give any directions necessary regarding the division or apportionment of the property, rights, assets and liabilities of the old municipality. Where a municipality feels that a financial hardship has been imposed by any Board annexation order, the municipality may request the Lieutenant Governor in Council to take measures to remove the hardship.

When annexation occurs, all lands designated or requested to be provided as environmental reserve (ER), municipal reserve (MR) or municipal/school reserve (MSR) passes to the new municipality.

3. *RESPONSES FROM ALBERTA'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS*

(a) Introduction

Of the nine (excluding the Edmonton Metropolitan Region) regional planning commissions in Alberta (Map 1), seven responded to the questionnaire on fringe areas:

1. The Calgary Regional Planning Commission
2. The Red Deer Regional Planning Commission
3. The South Peace Regional Planning Commission
4. The Southeast Alberta Regional Planning Commission
5. The Oldman River Regional Planning Commission
6. The Yellowhead Regional Planning Commission
7. The Mackenzie Regional Planning Commission

(b) Rural/Urban Fringe Issues

Unlike parts of Eastern Canada or the eastern United States, much of Alberta is predominantly rural. Even though country residential development and rural industry are growing concerns, the level of urban sprawl in Alberta is minor in comparison with more urbanized regions around Vancouver, Toronto, Philadelphia or Boston. Nevertheless, there are rural/urban fringe issues in Alberta's regional planning areas.

The most common problems relate to land use conflicts, restrictions on urban expansion, annexation disputes and a reluctance to co-operate in joint rural/urban planning.

Land use conflicts and restrictions on urban expansion often involve country residential development. The current Subdivision Regulation prohibits new multi-parcel country residential development within set distances of urban boundaries, but allows infilling of existing country residential subdivisions. Country residential development near urban boundaries is considered an issue in the Mackenzie, Red Deer and South Peace Regions. In the Calgary Region, there is a demand for

country residential development in the designated urban expansion areas around Calgary. Other types of existing or potential land use - industrial, commercial and so on - in the fringe cause problems in the Yellowhead, Oldman River, Southeast Alberta and the South Peace Regions and around the City of Red Deer.

Fringe area development can cause problems with extension of urban services, as in the Mackenzie and South Peace Regions; ribbon development and highway access, as in the Yellowhead and Oldman River Regions; and roadway standards and maintenance, as in the Red Deer Region.

Fringe area development can lead to inter-municipal conflicts, particularly over annexation. Annexation perceived as a tax grab, rather than a genuine need for additional urban land, was considered an issue in the Mackenzie, Oldman River, Red Deer and South Peace Regions. To some extent, these annexation disputes may be a result of the reluctance of some rural and urban municipalities to co-operate in joint planning. This appears to be the case in three of the four regions listed above. In the South Peace Region, joint planning and joint general municipal plans appear to have a wider acceptance.

The loss of good agricultural land was mentioned as a fringe area problem by the Oldman River, Yellowhead and Red Deer Commissions. Unfortunately, many urban centres are located on prime agricultural land. In the Red Deer Region, servicing, road improvements and land costs encourage developers to locate on cheaper, undeveloped and unsubdivided farmland.

Rural industry, in terms of both definition and location, is a fringe issue and a regional issue. Rural industry implies an industrial development located in and related to a rural area. Generally, such industries are related to agriculture, require extensive tracts of land and/or are incompatible with urban development because of noise, emissions, pollution, etc. However, with urban and rural municipalities competing for industrial development, conflicts can arise over the definition and location of "rural" and "urban" industries.

(c) Development Control and Issue Resolution in Rural/Urban Fringe Areas

In addition to the Provincial Subdivision Regulation, there are three levels of control over fringe area development - regional, inter-municipal and local.

In Alberta, regional plans were intended to provide policy guidelines for fringe area development and inter-municipal co-operation. Pursuant to provincial directives, regional plan policies encourage the location of urban development in existing urban centres, the protection of land for future urban expansion and the joint planning of fringe areas by adjacent rural and urban municipalities.

All regional planning commissions in Alberta have adopted a regional plan. Of the seven respondents, only one commission, for the Southeast Alberta Region, has a regional plan which does not define or deal directly with the rural/urban fringe. This may change when the current regional plan is reviewed. A 1987 "Urban

MAP 1 ALBERTA'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Edmonton Metropolitan
Regional Planning Commission

Fringe Study" for the Southeast Alberta Region indicated that, although there are only two significant fringes (the Medicine Hat - Redcliff and the Brooks Urban Fringes), there are a number of issues and potential issues including increased land values, conflicts with agricultural operations, urban growth and annexation and social/political conflicts.

The regional plans for Calgary, Red Deer and the South Peace Regions identify the rural/urban fringe in terms of set distances from urban centres of varying sizes. In Red Deer and the South Peace Region, the designation of a fringe area in a joint general municipal plan or joint agreement supersedes the regional plan definition. The regional plans for the Mackenzie and Oldman River Regions provide a qualitative or descriptive definition of the rural/urban fringe; the actual area or boundary of each urban fringe is defined in a joint general municipal plan. In the Yellowhead Region, for fringe areas where no joint general municipal plan applies, the only non-local control of fringe development is the Subdivision Regulation (for country residential subdivision).

Only the Calgary Regional Plan exercises direct control over fringe area development. The Regional Plan identifies "permitted" and "discretionary" land uses in the rural/urban fringe. "Permitted" uses are those which a municipality can approve at its own discretion; "discretionary" uses are those which require a Regional Plan amendment. Permitted uses include extensive agriculture, institutional uses and residential uses on the "first parcel out" of a quarter section. Discretionary uses include country residential, rural industrial and rural local commercial uses. Each site specific amendment application is evaluated according to criteria outlined in the Regional Plan. The Regional Planning Commission assists municipalities in preparing amendments.

In other regional planning areas, specific details regarding land use, such as permitted and discretionary uses, are provided by the land use by-laws of the rural municipalities. Urban general municipal plans generally indicate future expansion areas outside the urban boundary, but an urban municipality has no jurisdiction beyond its corporate boundaries. Rural general municipal plans often include fringe area policies and indicate broad land use categories in fringe areas. However, it is the rural municipalities' land use by-laws which control day-to-day development decisions in the rural/urban fringe.

In order to reduce land use and inter-municipal conflicts, some rural municipalities designate an "urban fringe" district around urban municipalities. This occurs, for example, in the Oldman River and Southeast Alberta Regions. In the Red Deer Region, the County of Red Deer Land Use By-law includes a Restrictive Land Use District, while other rural municipalities include fringe areas in an Agricultural District.

The land use by-law can be an adequate tool for dealing with local development problems in fringe areas around many urban centres. For example, in the 1987 Southeast Alberta Region "Fringe Area Study," it was found that, with the exception of the Medicine Hat - Redcliff and Brooks fringe areas, most problems

could be addressed by existing land use by-laws and regulations. In the Oldman River Region, while there are fringe area problems, they are neither frequent nor intensive. In the Red Deer Region, restrictive land use districts around urban centres are considered as one means of solving land use and transportation problems in the rural/urban fringe.

All seven regional planning commissions emphasized the need for inter-municipal co-operation and communication. In the Calgary Region, although it was felt that fringe area issues were more readily handled through the regional plan amendment process, joint planning is encouraged. The South Peace, Red Deer and Mackenzie Regional Planning Commissions emphasize joint planning as one solution to fringe area problems. In the Oldman River, Red Deer and South Peace Regions, inter-municipal consultation, special studies and ad hoc or permanent committees deal with issues not covered adequately by existing statutory plans and land use by-laws. For example, in 1987 the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission appointed an annexation committee. The committee provides an opportunity for municipal representatives to discuss their concerns and interests and to resolve their differences before the Local Authorities Board hearing on an annexation application. To date, the Commission feels that the annexation committee has been effective.

In addition to promoting communication between municipalities, the Red Deer Regional Planning Commission is examining alternative directions or increased densities to handle urban growth and reduce the loss of farmland to urban expansion. To reduce competition for non-residential tax assessment, the Commission is attempting to distinguish between different types of industrial and commercial development. Some industries are better located in a rural area; others, in an urban centre.

(d) Urban Fringe Categories or Models

Within the provincial legislative framework, the seven regional planning areas which responded fit into one or more of the following categories:

(i) Regions in which the fringe area is designated in a regional plan.

Three of the regional planning commissions (Calgary, Red Deer and the South Peace) designate the rural/urban fringe in a regional plan. The definition is based on the provincial Subdivision Regulation limits for multiple-parcel country residential development; however, there are local variations. In the Calgary Region, the urban fringe comprises lands within five miles from the boundary of a city with a population equal to or greater than 100,000; lands within two miles of a city, town or village with a population equal to or greater than 1000, but less than 100,000; and lands within one mile of the boundary of a town, village or summer village with a population of less than 1,000 people. In the Red Deer Region, fringe areas are identical to the provincial subdivision regulations for country residential subdivisions. In the South Peace Region, the five mile fringe is reserved for

the largest urban centre, Grande Prairie; the remaining towns, new towns and villages have a two-mile fringe.

In the Red Deer and South Peace Regions, the regional plan definition of a fringe area can be superseded by a definition or definitions in a joint general municipal plan. Both regional planning commissions encourage joint planning and the adoption of joint general municipal plans.

The Calgary Region is in a unique position. Any change to a fringe area, as designated in the Calgary Regional Plan, requires an amendment to the Regional Plan.

(ii) Regions in which the Fringe Area is defined in a joint General Municipal P

In addition to the Red Deer and South Peace Commissions, two other commissions recognize fringe areas designated in joint general municipal plans. Unlike the Red Deer and South Peace Commissions, however, the Regional Planning Commissions for the Yellowhead and Mackenzie Regions include a very general definition of the rural/urban fringe in a regional plan and rely on joint general municipal plans to provide a more detailed definition. In the absence of a joint general municipal plan, the Yellowhead Region uses the Subdivision Regulation to define the fringe in terms of country residential development.

(iii) Regions in which the fringe area is defined in local municipal plans and land use by-laws

In the Oldman River Region, the urban fringe is defined by distance - usually one-half to two miles from an urban boundary - in a rural general municipal plan and/or land use by-law. Many rural land use by-laws actually have an "urban fringe" district. Similarly, each rural municipality in the Southeast Alberta Region has an urban fringe category in its land use by-law. The fringe area boundary for each urban municipality generally coincides with Section 20 of the Subdivision Regulation.

(e) Summary

Fringe area planning in Alberta is based on a hierarchy of plans. The provincial Planning Act designates planning authority and establishes responsibilities. The Subdivision Regulation controls country residential development around urban municipalities. With one exception (Southeast Alberta), regional plans provide broad policies and guidelines relating to the rural/urban fringe. Joint general municipal plans are one means by which urban and rural municipalities can designate a mutually satisfactory fringe area. An urban general municipal plan generally indicates future growth directions and may include fringe area policies. Similarly, rural general municipal plans show broad land use categories and may include policies relating to urban fringe development. Finally, it is the rural land

use by-law which provides the basis for day-to-day control over fringe area development.

Variations in this hierarchy and in the type and seriousness of fringe area problems depends to a large extent on the character of each planning region and the individual municipalities which comprise it.

IV. THE URBAN FRINGE CONCEPT IN THE EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGION

1. INTRODUCTION

The Edmonton Metropolitan Region is unique in Alberta. It is the most complex and highly urbanized of the ten regional planning areas. The region consists of nineteen municipalities -- fifteen urban and four rural -- each with its own particular identity. Urban centres range in size from the Village of New Sarepta, with 355 people, to the City of Edmonton, with a population of over 600,000. The rural municipalities vary, from the predominantly rural Municipal District of Sturgeon to the more urbanized Strathcona County. Within its 6700 km^2, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region contains five cities, a hamlet of almost 34,000 people and six Metropolitan Industrial Areas (Map 2).

In 1984, the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan was adopted and ratified to provide an overall growth management strategy for this diverse and complex region.

2. THE EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PLAN

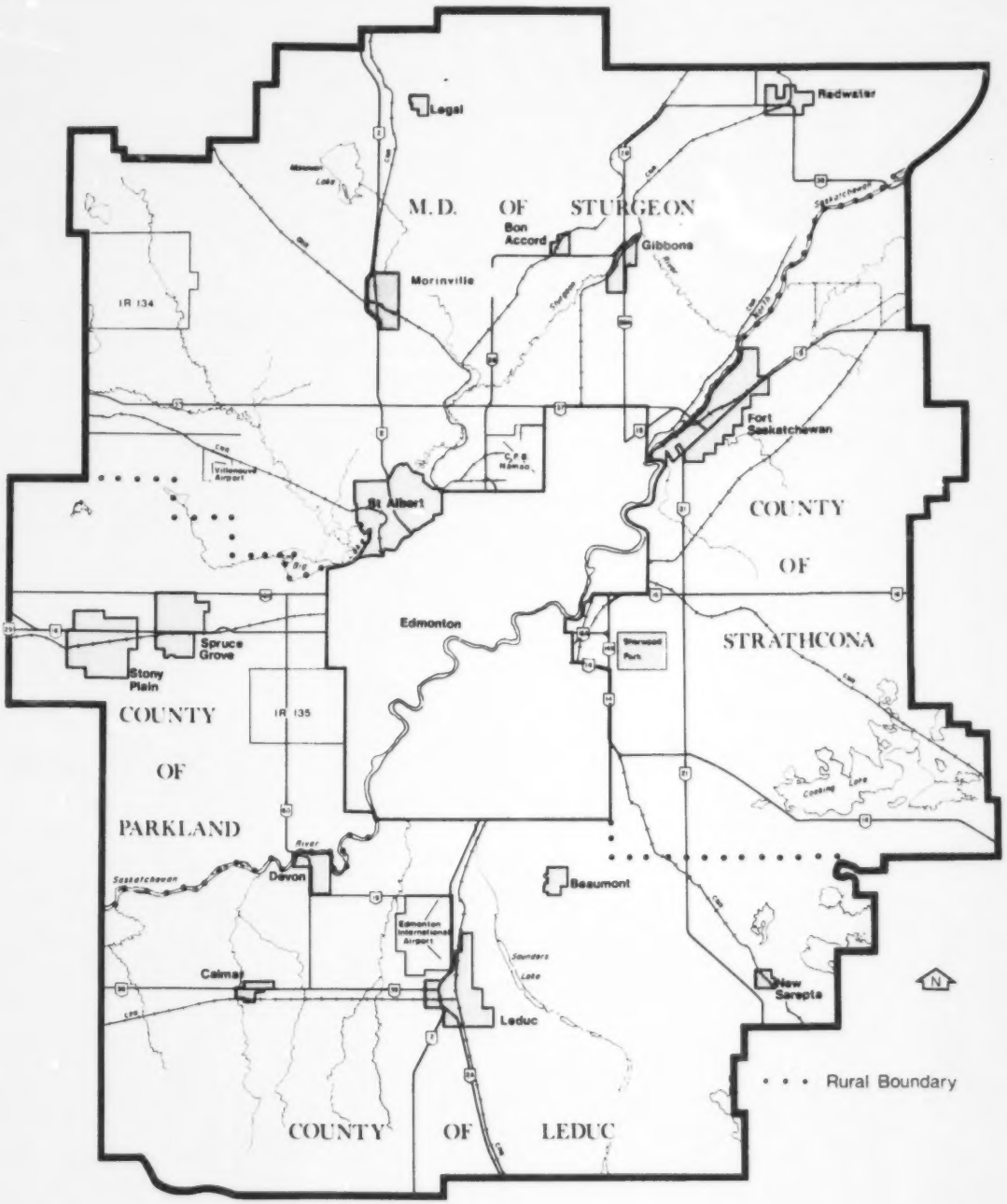
(a) Growth Management Framework

The Regional Plan is basically a land use planning document; therefore, plan policies deal essentially with land use and development. In order to manage growth in the Edmonton Region, the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan contains a regional growth management framework. The intent of the Commission and its member municipalities is for:

(i) regional growth "... to be centred in Edmonton as the dominant community in the Region. Edmonton should maintain its present proportion of the Region's population;"

(ii) the remaining population growth "... to be focused primarily on the Inner Metropolitan Area (defined as Edmonton, Sherwood Park and St. Albert) and other existing urban municipalities;"

(iii) an unduly dispersed pattern of "... residential, industrial and other types of human settlement to be avoided;"



MAP 2 THE EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGION

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

(iv) better agricultural land ". . . to be conserved, and the wise use of other natural resources to be ensured;"

(v) the land use pattern in the Region ". . . to allow for the provision of transportation and utility services in a way which reinforces the city-centred region concept;" and

(vi) the rural municipalities "...to continue in an agricultural role and provide lifestyle alternatives to the urban residential setting through minor growth in hamlets and country residential development."

(b) Fringe Area Policies

The Regional Plan contains policies that deal specifically with Fringe Area Planning (Section 2.0). Pursuant to the Alberta Planning Board regional plan guidelines, the objectives of these policies are:

> "To provide a mechanism for the co-ordination of land use planning in fringe areas and a means by which inter-municipal conflict in fringe areas can be resolved.
>
> To provide for the rational conversion of land from low intensity to high intensity uses.
>
> To protect options for future urban expansion."

The Fringe Area policies themselves:

(i) establish a (3.2 km or 2 mile) interim fringe area boundary, in the absence of a joint general municipal plan;

(ii) encourage urban and rural municipalities to prepare a joint general municipal plan and undertake joint planning efforts;

(iii) require referral of statutory plans, land use by-law amendments and so on, that affect fringe areas, unless some other agreement is reached;

(iv) establish general guidelines for joint general municipal plans; and

(v) encourage rural municipalities to preserve land for future urban expansion.

Under the Regional Plan policies, adjoining municipalities are encouraged to jointly establish "appropriate" boundaries around each of the urban centres. Until such time as this is done, the Plan established an interim fringe area extending 3.2 km beyond corporate urban boundaries. Some municipalities consider the interim fringe area to be excessive, whereas others perceive it to be inadequate. For some municipalities, urban expansion in certain directions is hindered by such physical features as the North Saskatchewan River, and for some the urban fringes overlap.

For these reasons, the 3.2 km fringe was considered as an interim measure. Despite this, very few municipalities have actually attempted to establish more appropriate boundaries for their fringe areas. Only the City of Fort Saskatchewan and Strathcona County have officially done so. For all other municipalities the 3.2 km fringe area still applies.

Regional Plan Policies set out guidelines to prevent incompatible development on rural lands adjacent to urban centres. However, subject to the Subdivision Regulation and the agricultural policies of the Regional Plan, it is the rural municipality which makes the final decision regarding fringe area development (unless there is an appeal). The Regional Plan requires referral, to the affected municipality, of statutory plans, land use by-laws or amendments thereto resulting in a major land use change in a fringe area. Referral of development applications is not required. If, for example, the fringe area falls within an exclusive agricultural district, almost any development would require a by-law amendment and, consequently, notification of the affected municipality(ies). However, in many instances existing plans and by-laws allow a wide range of permitted and discretionary uses. Although some of these may be incompatible with urban development, the development may occur without referral to the neighbouring municipality.

At the same time, although the rural municipalities are the stewards of the rural/urban fringe, the underlying assumption is that a fringe area will one day be annexed by the urban municipality. Under the Alberta Planning Act, urban and rural municipalities are granted the same rights, privileges and responsibilities. Under the Regional Plan (following provincial directives), only rural areas include designated fringe areas. Policy 2.5 recommends that, in the absence of a joint general municipal plan, municipalities should not allow the location, in Fringe Areas, of land uses which:

"(a) may be incompatible with existing urban development; and

(b) may preclude or limit options for future urban expansion."

This should put the onus on urban municipalities to clearly identify their future land use needs, and on rural municipalities to then "reserve" those lands for future urban expansion. However, urban municipalities may not, or feel they cannot, project their long-term land requirements. Rural municipalities may see little or no benefit in reserving land and restricting development for future urban expansion. For these and perhaps other reasons, only one Joint General Municipal Plan has been completed within the Region to date.

(c) Urban Settlement and Land Use Policies

In addition to Section 2.0 -- Fringe Area Planning, the Regional Plan contains policies that, directly or indirectly affect fringe areas. Section 1.0 - Urban Settlement and Land Use - restricts "urban growth" to existing urban municipalities and Sherwood Park. Generally speaking, this would prohibit urban

development in rural municipalities including fringe areas. However, "urban growth" is not defined in the Regional Plan, and is left to interpretation and agreement.

This particular section has as one objective "to provide for the planned expansion of urban land use, while avoiding the premature conversion of agricultural land."

(d) Rural Settlement and Land Use Policies

One of the objectives of Section 3.0 -- Rural Settlement and Land Use -- is:

> "To ensure that rural residential land use and development takes place in a planned framework without jeopardizing the present and future use of the region's agricultural land and other valuable natural resources, and without limiting the options for future urban expansion."

Many fringe areas already include country residential subdivisions that predate the Regional Plan. Both the Subdivision Regulation (which defers to a regional plan) and Policy 3.6 of the Regional Plan permit rural municipalities to "...allow for multiple parcel country residential land use to infill or build on existing concentrations." The terms "infilling" and "build on" are left open to interpretation. Because the Regional Plan exercises only limited control over country residential development on poor agricultural land (Canada Land Inventory soil classification Classes 4 to 7), the possibility exists for new country residential subdivision in a fringe area. Country residential subdivisions presently outside any designated fringe area may one day be included in an expanded fringe boundary. Therefore, the Subdivision Regulation and the Regional Plan policies, as they now exist, may be merely postponing the contact between urban land uses and rural residential land uses.

(e) Economic and Industrial Development Policies

Section 4.0 -- Economic and Industrial Development -- contains these objectives:

> "To guide industry to lands best suited for industrial purposes, and
>
> To enable municipalities to achieve balanced growth by increasing local employment opportunities and strengthening their non-residential tax base."

With the exception of "rural industrial land uses", most industrial development is directed, through Regional Plan policy (among other factors), to the urban municipalities and to the Metropolitan Industrial Areas (MIAs). The Regional Plan identifies six Metropolitan Industrial Areas. All six are within the fringe of at least one urban municipality and several overlap rural/urban boundaries. Although MIAs are intended to permit a wide range of industrial uses, Policies 4.6(1) and 4.6(2) attempt to give some guidance with regard to the type of industry which might be expected to locate in urban and rural MIAs.

Policy 4.6(1) states that MIAs in "urban" municipalities should accommodate "... a diverse range of industrial development which is generally characterized by high density and high servicing standards." Policy 4.6(2) states that MIA's in "rural" municipalities should accommodate "... industry which requires larger areas of land and lower levels of servicing than in urban municipalities." Neither of these policies precludes "rural" type industrial uses from locating in urban MIAs, or urban type industrial uses from locating in rural MIAs.

Policy 4.10(c) specifies that rural industrial land uses, outside the Metropolitan Industrial Areas, should not locate within Fringe Areas.

(f) Agricultural Policies

Section 5.0 -- Agriculture -- contains the objectives:

> "To conserve agricultural land for continued agricultural use.
>
> To discourage the unwarranted fragmentation of agricultural land.
>
> To minimize conflict between viable agricultural operations and non-agricultural land uses."

Most urban municipalities in the Region are surrounded wholly or in part by good agricultural land. The Regional Plan requires rural municipalities to identify and protect better agricultural land. Municipalities are requested to provide for measures to minimize conflict between intensive agricultural activities and other land uses. At the same time, the urban fringe is considered to be an area into which future urban expansion could occur, regardless of the soil quality. Obviously, once good agricultural land is annexed by an urban municipality, the same restrictive subdivision policies (Policies 5.4 and 5.5) which apply in rural municipalities can no longer apply. However, under Policy 1.2(f) urban municipalities are expected to protect better agricultural land until it is required for urban development.

While all Regional Plan policies affect the rural/urban fringe to some extent, the most relevant Sections are those discussed above.

3. THE MUNICIPALITIES AND THE RURAL/URBAN FRINGE

Municipal staff, and in some instances councillors, were very co-operative in discussing fringe area issues in the Edmonton Region. Responses were received over the telephone, by mail or in person from the following municipalities:

1. Cities: Fort Saskatchewan
   Leduc
   St. Albert
   Spruce Grove

2. Towns: Beaumont
Bon Accord
Calmar
Devon
Gibbons
Morinville
Redwater
Stony Plain

3. Villages: Legal
New Sarepta

4. Rural Municipalities: County of Leduc
M.D. of Sturgeon.

(a) The Municipal District of Sturgeon

The Municipal District of Sturgeon occupies the north portion of the Edmonton Region. Most soils within the M.D. are Class 4 or better (CLI soil classification rating). The M.D. is predominantly agricultural and considers itself a rural municipality. In other words, agriculture is the dominant economic activity and the M.D.'s statutory plans and by-laws reflect the Municipality's concern with conservation of better agricultural land and the maintenance of agricultural operations. Eight urban municipalities -- Edmonton, St. Albert, Fort Saskatchewan, Redwater, Gibbons, Bon Accord, Morinville and Legal -- have fringe areas which extend into the M.D. of Sturgeon. In several cases - Edmonton/St. Albert, Edmonton/Fort Saskatchewan and Gibbons/Bon Accord -- the fringe areas overlap. At the present time, the fringe area boundary for all eight urban centres is the interim 3.2 km boundary established in the Regional Plan (Map 3).

The M.D. of Sturgeon General Municipal Plan recognizes and contains policies dealing specifically with the rural/urban fringe. The Fringe Area policies (4.2.1 and 4.2.3):

(i) require notification to an urban municipality (or municipalities) of any statutory plan, land use by-law or amendments affecting land within the fringe area boundary;

(ii) promote co-operation in fringe area boundary refinement and fringe area planning; and

(iii) encourage negotiation regarding urban expansion by annexation.

In its General Municipal Plan, the M.D. supports the "...continued orderly growth of the existing towns and villages..." (Policy 2.0.2) and endeavours to "...maintain the rural farm character of the Municipality." The M.D. attempts to do this by:

(i) not opposing an annexation application "...if the need for additional lands can be demonstrated to its satisfaction" (Policy 4.2.3);

(ii) protecting "...high quality agricultural lands for agricultural purposes" (Policy 2.0.1);

(iii) opposing the "...unwarranted fragmentation of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes..." (Policy 2.1.1);

(iv) not supporting the subdivision of land for multiple parcel country residential purposes if it is closer than "...the distances from an urban municipality as prescribed by the Subdivision Regulation..." unless exceptions are justified;

(v) requiring future country residential subdivisions to seek an amendment to the land use by-law;

(vi) not encouraging the creation of new urban municipalities (Policy 2.0.3);

(vii) maintaining an exclusive Agricultural District (Policy 2.1.1.);

(viii) encouraging most prospective industries "...to locate in one of the three designated industrial parks within the Municipality" (Policy 2.5.1); and

(ix) maintaining a separation distance between urban centres and intensive livestock operations (Policy 2.1.5).

The M.D. recognizes the problems associated with country residential development in agricultural areas. These problems are not limited to fringe areas; they occur wherever country residential development conflicts with agricultural operations. In the M.D., there is some country residential development in fringe areas, particularly near Edmonton/St. Albert and around Gibbons. Much of the development is concentrated along the Sturgeon River Valley. The present General Municipal Plan states that the M.D. "...has sufficient lots to meet the expected demand until the end of the century, even if no further subdivision takes place during this time."

Most of the land in urban fringe areas is designated for agricultural use. However, like the other municipalities in the Edmonton Region, the M.D. is interested in attracting industrial development for the resulting tax revenue. Industrial land is found in the Morinville fringe and across the North Saskatchewan River from Fort Saskatchewan. In 1986, it appeared that "...the Municipal District [had] sufficient developed industrial land for the next decade." The basic industrial development objective of the M.D. is to "expand the economic base of the Municipality by encouraging industrial development." Therefore, the M.D. is in competition with other municipalities to attract industry. As part of its concern with the rural/urban fringe, the M.D. has included policies (Policy 4.2) relating to industrial development in fringe areas, especially the Fort Saskatchewan fringe. The M.D. has indicated

RGE. 1 • RGE. 27 • RGE. 26 • RGE. 25 • RGE. 24 • RGE. 23 • RGE. 22 • RGE. 21 • RGE. 20

TWP. 56 • TWP. 57 • TWP. 56 •

TWP. 55 • TWP. 54 • TWP. 53

CITY OF ST. ALBERT

CITY OF EDMONTON

CITY OF EDMONTON

FORT SASKATCHEWAN

MAP 3

FRINGE AREAS IN THE M.D. OF STURGEON

Fringe Area based on The Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan, Policy 2.1

Overlapping Fringe Areas

Boundary of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region

N

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

RGE. 1 • RGE. 27 • RGE. 26 • RGE. 25 • RGE. 24 • RGE. 23 • RGE. 22 • RGE. 21 • RGE. 20

that it will negotiate with the Fort to ensure that development of the Sturgeon Industrial Area in the fringe area "...takes place in accordance with the relevant policies of the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan." At the present time, the fringe area boundary for Fort Saskatchewan is the 3.2 km Regional Plan interim boundary. There is no proposal to expand the general industrial district in the south-east portion of the M.D. (and little development as of 1989). The industrial areas appear "...to contain sufficient land to meet industrial development demands for quite some time for that portion of the Municipality." Sturgeon Industrial Estates Area is designated in the Regional Plan as a Metropolitan Industrial Area.

The fringe areas around Legal, Morinville, St. Albert, Bon Accord and Fort Saskatchewan are areas of high to fair (soil classes 1 to 3) agricultural capability. Both Gibbons and Redwater are almost surrounded by Class 1 to 3 soils, except in the north-east. Therefore, the General Municipal Plan policies which discourage land fragmentation and non-agricultural development should, in theory, limit development in the fringes of these 2 municipalities. This would conform with Regional Plan policies.

The General Municipal Plan indicated that an Exclusive Agricultural District would be defined by the M.D.'s Land Use By-law.[5] It was felt that such a district is "...necessary to protect the economic base of agricultural service and marketing firms and industries, to prevent scattered haphazard ex-urban growth which may hamper agricultural operations and to reduce costs to the rural taxpayer of servicing costly non-agricultural uses."

A new Land Use By-law was recently adopted. However, fringe area development up to this point has been controlled by the 1983 By-law. Within the Agricultural (AG) District, the only Permitted Uses are extensive farming and livestock raising, pasture, market gardening and tree nurseries and one single family residence per lot. Intensive livestock operations are a Discretionary Use, but are not permitted to locate within 300 m (1000 feet) to a maximum of 1.6 km (one mile) of an urban centre, unless a greater distance is specified by Alberta Agriculture. Highway commercial uses, another Discretionary Use, are governed by the Provincial Subdivision Regulation and are not to be located within 5 miles of urban municipalities.

The minimum parcel size in the Agricultural District is 32.4 ha (80 acres) except in the case of a first parcel out (maximum size one hectare/2.47 acres) or a physically severed parcel. (The General Municipal Plan was recently amended to allow both a first parcel out and one or more physically severed parcels).

[5]The M.D. of Sturgeon Land Use By-law 636/89 states that the general purpose of the Agricultural (AG) District is " ... to maintain the agricultural areas of the Municipal District for primary agricultural production, and to preserve valuable agricultural land from inappropriate development."

In the Agricultural District, the type of development is limited. Land fragmentation is controlled by the minimum parcel size. Much of the land in urban fringe areas is zoned Agricultural. Redwater, Legal (except for a tiny country residential area to the north-west) and Morinville (except for the Hamlet of Cardiff and the Heritage Industrial Park) are surrounded by agricultural land. Similarly, Bon Accord and Gibbons are located within the Agricultural District, except for blocks of country residential development along the Sturgeon River and north of Gibbons. The river valley is designated as Potential Wildlife and/or Recreation.

The Agricultural District is the predominant district in the Edmonton, St. Albert and Fort Saskatchewan fringe areas. Country residential districts are found along the river valleys and in isolated pockets in the Edmonton/St. Albert and Edmonton/Fort Saskatchewan fringe areas.

Country residential development, except for first parcels out, is not permitted on Class 1, 2 or, depending on farmland assessment criteria, 3 soils.

The major industrial districts within fringe areas are the Sturgeon Industrial Area, north-west of Fort Saskatchewan and zoned General Industrial, and the St. Albert Airport Industrial Park, north-west of St. Albert. There is also the small Heritage Industrial Park west of Morinville. The General Industrial District that extends into the Fort Saskatchewan fringe is not zoned for heavy industry. Permitted Uses include: warehousing; storage and supply depots; bulk oil; agricultural processing, cleaning and packing. No noxious or hazardous uses are allowed.

To date rural/urban relations in the M.D. of Sturgeon have been cordial. With few exceptions, the annexation history of each urban centre reveals little inter-municipal conflict. Most urban municipalities (Redwater, Gibbons, Legal, Bon Accord and Morinville) feel they have sufficient land within their boundaries for the next ten to twenty years. There are no obvious future problems with respect to Redwater, Legal, Bon Accord or Gibbons. All are surrounded by largely unsubdivided agricultural land. The country residential subdivisions near Gibbons and Bon Accord are concentrated along the Sturgeon River. In terms of future urban expansion, municipal staff of the M.D. of Sturgeon, Morinville, St. Albert, Bon Accord, Gibbons, Redwater and Legal feel the 3.2 km fringe established in the Regional Plan is adequate or even excessive.

Long-term expansion of the City of St. Albert is restricted mainly by topographic features, Big Lake and the Sturgeon River (with restrictive environmental and recreation designations) and by the City of Edmonton. Land to the north and northwest is still predominantly agricultural.

The North Saskatchewan River is a significant barrier to urban expansion by the City of Fort Saskatchewan. City staff have indicated that there are no plans to cross the river. Part of the fringe area in the M.D. is designated in the Regional Plan as a Metropolitan Industrial Area. Conflicts may arise, not necessarily over urban expansion, but because of incompatible land uses or competition over industrial development. The M.D.'s General Municipal Plan states that the

limitation (i.e. the industrial park's location across the river from Fort Saskatchewan) "...could be largely overcome if the north route of the proposed future Fort Saskatchewan bypass [the realignment of Highway 15] were chosen for construction. Such a route would enhance the accessibility, and therefore potential, of the Municipal District's industrial areas." Industrial development in south-east Sturgeon could lead to conflicts over (i) the type of industry and its effects on Fort Saskatchewan and (ii) future annexation proposals by the City. To prevent future conflicts, the two municipalities have begun the process of preparing a joint general municipal plan. However, following a public hearing on the plan, further discussions have been suspended, pending the outcome of the Fort Saskatchewan/County of Strathcona annexation applications.

There have been no joint general municipal plans adopted in the M.D. of Sturgeon. With the exception of the Fort Saskatchewan/M.D. of Sturgeon joint plan under consideration, neither the M.D. nor the other urban municipalities have actively begun work on a formal plan. The prevailing attitude among municipal staff is that rural/urban communication is good, there is mutual trust, there are enough joint committees and boards which encourage co-operation, there are no foreseeable problems, and a formal joint plan and/or planning process is not a priority at this time.

Some of the advantages of a joint general municipal plan were recognized, including an increased awareness of what is happening, and is likely to happen, in the fringe area, and a better opportunity to comment on proposed developments.

In the opinion of some municipal officials, the impact of any development on an urban centre can depend as much on its location (prevailing winds, hydrology, hydrogeology, geology, soils, topography, roadways) and intensity of operations as on the type of development. An example given was that of an intensive agricultural operation, such as a hog farm, which would have a greater effect if located upwind, than downwind, from a community. Perception can be important. One municipality may perceive a particular development as harmful in its fringe area; another municipality may consider the same development beneficial to the community.

Fringe area development can have an economic, as well as a planning, impact on an urban municipality. For example, an industrial park in the M.D. was competing with Morinville for industrial/commercial development. Joint planning and operation of the park was tried and proved unsatisfactory. In January, 1983, Morinville annexed the industrial park. The co-operative attitude of the Town and the M.D. was noted by the Local Authorities Board. Because of servicing difficulties, it is unlikely that Morinville will apply to annex the Heritage Industrial Park west of Highway 2. The M.D.'s General Municipal Plan indicates that "...Heritage Industrial Park provides an alternative location for commercial enterprises oriented toward the Town of Morinville." The same spirit of co-operation, already demonstrated, may be required to prevent this small industrial park from becoming a source of future conflict.

As long as there is good communication and an effective referral process for development applications, rural/urban conflicts in the M.D. could be kept to a minimum. Until a major fringe issue arises, it is difficult to say whether a more formal joint rural/urban planning process would accomplish more than the present approach.

(b) The County of Leduc

Regional planning jurisdiction in the County of Leduc is divided between the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission and the Battle River Regional Planning Commission. In the Edmonton Region, six urban municipalities - Edmonton, Leduc, Devon, Beaumont, Calmar and New Sarepta - have fringe areas wholly or partly within the County (Map 4).

The County is predominantly agricultural. Outside the urban centres, the largest areas designated for non-agricultural uses are the Nisku Business and Industrial Park (Nisku), the country residential area in the north-east (which is an agricultural/country residential district) and the recreation/wildlife habitat/lake shoreland areas along rivers and lakes.

A new County of Leduc General Municipal Plan is currently being prepared. The 1980 General Municipal Plan recognized the necessity for and benefits of urban growth, as well as the negative effects and potential for conflict. Under the heading "Urban Growth", the Plan states that suitable areas "...must be reserved for future urban use in order to facilitate the economic and orderly development of urban municipalities within the County. Urban expansion should proceed logically as an extension to the existing urban land use pattern as opposed to leap-frog development."

The land around most urban centres was designated, in the General Municipal Plan, for agricultural use. The agricultural policies (Policies 1.1.1 to 1.1.3):

(i) designate most of the County's lands for agricultural use;

(ii) direct non-agricultural uses in agricultural districts onto lands having poorer capability for agriculture; and

(iii) discourage land uses not compatible with farming operations from locating in agricultural districts.

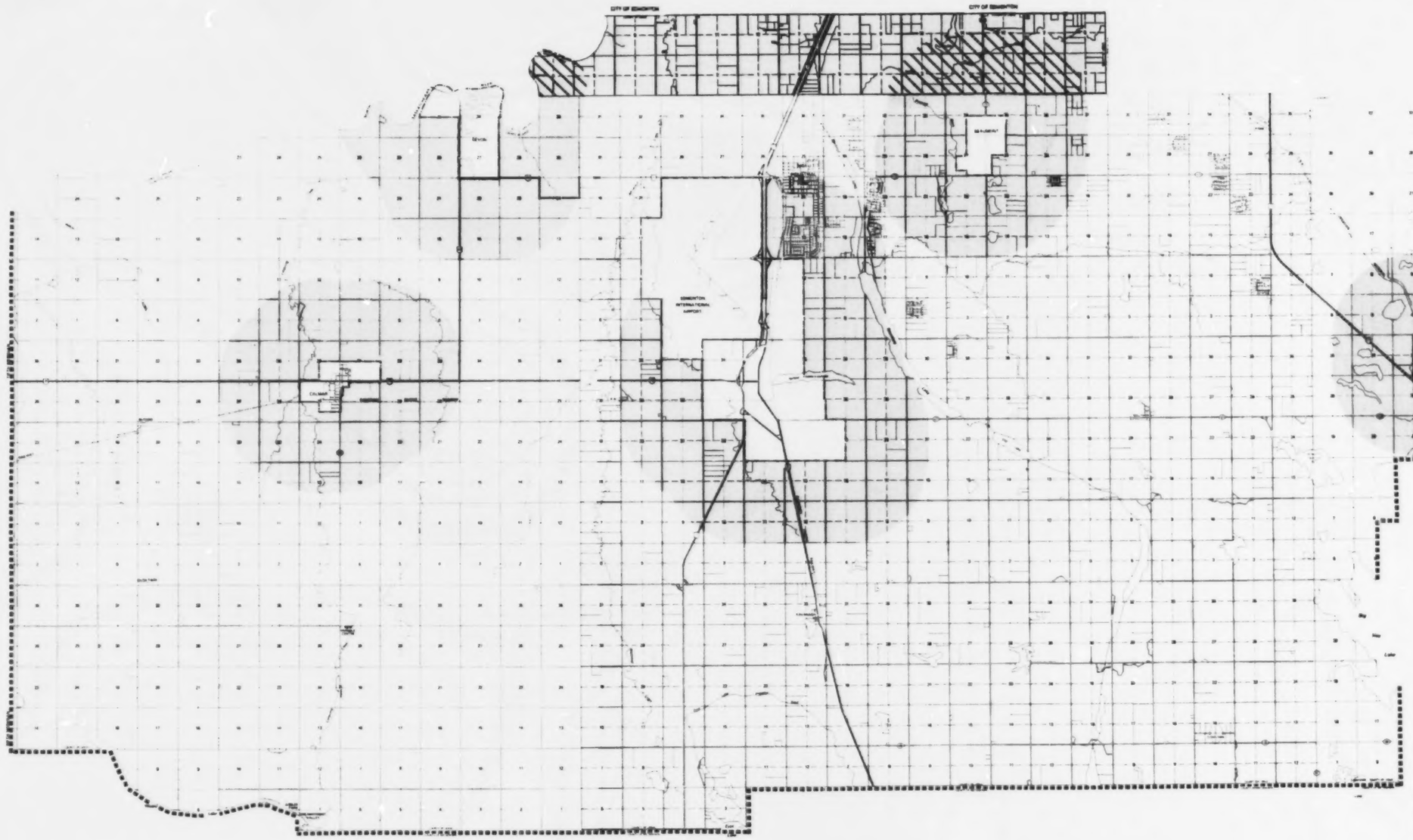
To prevent land fragmentation, the County accepted the quarter section as the minimum parcel size in agricultural areas (Policy 1.2.1). Policy 1.2.2 lists the exceptions:

(i) the first parcel out for a residential site;

(ii) an economically viable intensive farming operation;

RGE. 28 · RGE. 27 · RGE. 26 · RGE. 25 · RGE. 24 · RGE. 23 · RGE. 22 · RGE. 21

TWP. 51 · TWP. 50 · TWP. 49



TWP. 48

MAP 4

FRINGE AREAS IN THE COUNTY OF LEDUC

Fringe Area based on The Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan, Policy 2.1

Overlapping Fringe Areas

Boundary of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region

N

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

RGE. 28 · RGE. 27 · RGE. 26 · RGE. 25 · RGE. 24 · RGE. 23 · RGE. 22 · RGE. 21

(iii) compatible agriculture-related industries;

(iv) physically severed parcels; and

(v) non-agricultural uses specified as discretionary uses.

Most of the urban municipalities in the County are located on Class 1 to 3 soils. Only the Beaumont and Leduc fringes contain significant areas of Class 4 or poorer quality soils.

The Land Use Districts designated for the fringe areas in the County's Land Use By-law correspond with the Future Land Use Guide of the current General Municipal Plan. Much of the land around the urban municipalities falls within the Agricultural (AG) District. Permitted Uses within this District are limited: cereal and forage crop farming, extensive livestock raising, native pasture/grazing, market gardens, tree nurseries and single family residences. However, Discretionary Uses include intensive livestock operations, churches and cemeteries, institutional uses, natural resource extraction, outdoor storage and commercial greenhouses. The Land Use By-law establishes separation distances between intensive livestock operations and urban centres. However, natural resource extraction is limited to the resource site. As a Discretionary Use, resource extraction operations could be allowed in a fringe area without notification of the affected urban municipality.

The General Municipal Plan designated the north-east corner of the County as a country residential development area (Policy 2.2.1). Only the Village of New Sarepta's fringe is directly affected by this country residential designation. The Village, like the other urban municipalities within or adjacent to the County, accepts the Regional Plan's interim fringe definition. The north portion of New Sarepta's 3.2 km wide fringe falls within this country residential area, however it should be noted that this designation was in place prior to the adoption of the Regional Plan. There are also country residential subdivisions in the City of Leduc and Beaumont fringe areas.

The General Municipal Plan's industrial policies encourage industrial development in the County (Policy 3.1). Guidelines are provided for the location of industry outside Nisku, including the need for roadway and railway access, the need for concentrated development and the need to conserve prime agricultural land.

There is no specific policy relating to industrial development in fringe areas. The Nisku Business and Industrial Park which occupies the north portion of the City of Leduc's fringe, was considered "...the focus for secondary industry in the County." Policy 3.2 of the General Municipal Plan states that Nisku "...will be allowed to realize its ultimate development potential as determined by the Nisku General Municipal Plan." Policy 3.4.1(b) states that existing and future industrial areas will be protected by "...resisting annexation efforts by other municipalities." This resistance was demonstrated in the 1987/88 annexation conflict between the County of Leduc and the City of Leduc.

From a strictly planning point of view, Nisku is an excellent location for industrial development. Road, rail and air transportation is readily accessible; labour, markets and support services are available. Much of the land is rated Class 4 by Canada Land Inventory. The Regional Plan recognizes the Edmonton -- County of Leduc (Nisku) -- Leduc Industrial Corridor as a Metropolitan Industrial Area. Because Nisku is considered a "vital part" of the local economy (General Municipal Plan Policy 3.2), the County vigorously opposed the City of Leduc's annexation application for this area. For this and other reasons, the Provincial Cabinet allowed the City to annex only a small part of the proposed annexation area and the County has now agreed to pay the City a portion of the taxes from the International Airport on an annual basis. It remains to be seen whether improved communication and joint planning efforts can resolve existing and future problems.

Beaumont, Devon, Calmar and New Sarepta have had no major fringe area problems. The County has rarely opposed an annexation application by these communities. With the County's approval, the Town of Beaumont's current General Municipal Plan included adjacent County lands within the GMP's planning study area (however, the Town has no authority over these lands). In early 1989, the Town of Beaumont annexed three quarter sections. Because the Town's urban expansion needs were considered justified, the County supported Beaumont's annexation application.

However, the issue of stormwater management in Beaumont is of concern to the County and has not been resolved to the County's satisfaction. Calmar and New Sarepta have plenty of vacant land within their boundaries; further annexation is unlikely for many years.

The 3.2 km fringe boundary around the Town of Devon extends into the County of Parkland. However, the Town has no intention of developing on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River. In terms of future expansion, municipal staff regard the adjacent lands west and south of the Town as the urban fringe.

These four urban municipalities tend not to consider the rural/urban fringe in terms of future urban expansion. Municipal staff were more concerned with future development in fringe areas and how this could adversely affect the community. For example, the Town of Beaumont identified at least three fringe boundaries, depending on the type of development. For intensive agriculture or a polluting industry, two miles is considered reasonable. For intensive residential or major permanent land use changes, one mile would be the minimum. For all other uses, any development within a half-mile of Beaumont would be of interest to the Town.

Town of Devon municipal staff felt the Regional Plan definition of a fringe area is very narrow. Like Beaumont, Calmar and New Sarepta, the Town of Devon recognizes the economic, political and social impacts (both existing and potential) of developments within the County and the Region. In terms of rural/urban interaction, it was felt that a two-mile fringe is unrealistic. In their view, events occurring ten miles away can have a greater impact on an urban municipality than a development adjacent to the urban boundary. For example, the transportation

network and the Edmonton-Nisku-Leduc industrial corridor are of greater concern than potential future annexation conflicts.

The County of Leduc and the four smaller urban municipalities consider themselves on good terms. Although Devon, Beaumont and Calmar expressed interest in a joint general municipal plan, the three communities feel they have a good working relationship with the County. Both the County and the Town of Beaumont are preparing a new general municipal plan. It appears that the two municipalities intend, through referral and consultation, to make their individual general municipal plans compatible. The major perceived advantage of a joint general municipal plan (or less formal joint planning process) is an increased awareness of, and a greater opportunity to comment on, developments affecting the urban and rural municipalities.

(c) County of Parkland

Only the eastern portion of the County of Parkland is in the Edmonton Region; the remainder of the County is in the Yellowhead Region. The County's largest urban municipalities - Spruce Grove and Stony Plain - are part of the Edmonton Region. Two other urban municipalities - Edmonton and St. Albert - have fringe areas extending into Parkland. With no joint general municipal plans or joint fringe agreements in place, the designated fringe boundary around the urban municipalities is the 3.2 km Regional Plan boundary (Map 5).

The County's General Municipal Plan is quite general and predates the Regional Plan. However, the Urban/Rural Residential policies (Policies 2.1 to 2.6) echo the Regional Plan Fringe Area policies in promoting the establishment of a joint planning committee (rural and urban municipalities) and the designation of a joint land use control zone around each incorporated municipality. This was intended to prevent "future conversion to urban uses" from being unduly expensive or difficult. However, the County warned the urban municipalities that if they were not prepared to work jointly with the County, then the County was prepared to go ahead with development in the urban fringe.

To some extent, the County's General Municipal Plan fringe area policies are directed towards the urban municipalities. The Plan's policies stress the importance of joint consultation when an urban municipality's statutory plans involve fringe areas and potential annexation areas; the need for "comprehensive annexation as opposed to piecemeal petitions;" the prevention of "leapfrogging of lands within the urban fringe areas;" and the need for urban development to take place as a logical extension of present land use patterns. The Plan recognizes that municipalities "...must contain a reasonable amount of land to allow for expansion within the foreseeable future."

An unusual policy (Policy 2.5) of the General Municipal Plan states that:

> "Development proposals within the urban fringe area will be prohibited if it is determined that the sole purpose of development is to escape either taxes or by-laws of the incorporated municipality."

Parkland, like the other Edmonton Region municipalities, is interested in attracting industrial and commercial development. At the same time, this policy implies that the County will reject a proposal for a development in the fringe area whose location in the fringe is not justified.

The Development Potential Map of the General Municipal Plan designates an "Urban Reserve" zone adjacent to the north, east and south sides of Spruce Grove and the west and south sides of Stony Plain. (The two municipalities have expanded since this map was adopted and an application by Spruce Grove to annex land between it and Stony Plain is currently under review by the Local Authorities Board). This Urban Reserve averages about one-half mile and varies in width from half a mile to about two and a half miles. This does not correspond with the 1984 Regional Plan's 3.2 km interim fringe boundary.

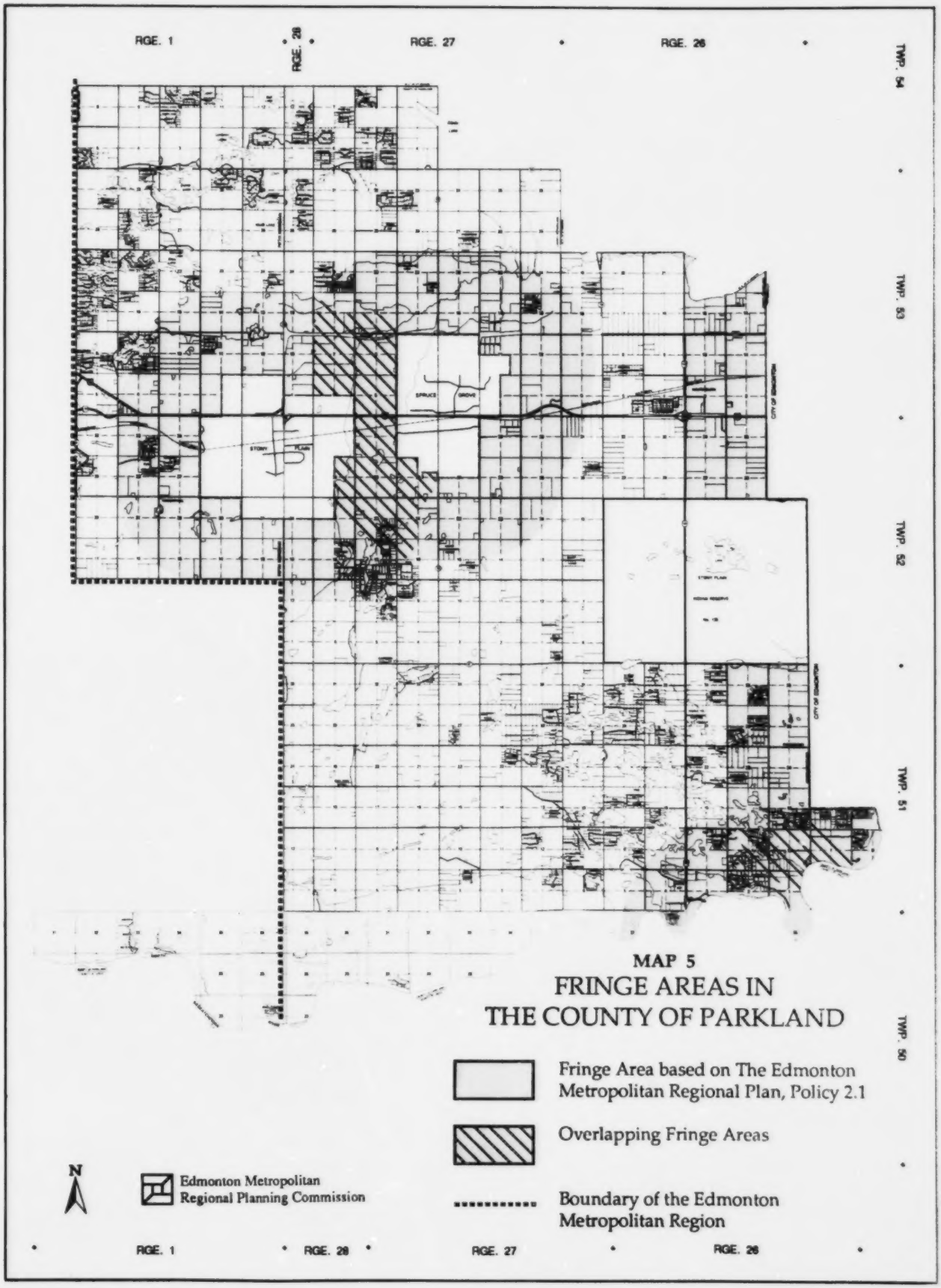
Recognizing that both agriculture and country residential development are "legitimate and beneficial" land uses in rural areas, the General Municipal Plan states that:

(i) "...no existing viable farming activity should be curtailed strictly because of the objections from new developments (Policy 1.8), and

(ii) "...no existing rural residence shall be infringed upon by the activities of adjacent landowners, especially those who have begun to practice the activity subsequent to the country residential parcel being created" (Policy 2.10)."

The County of Parkland General Municipal Plan was adopted in 1978. The County's Land Use By-law is a more recent document (1986) and is currently under review. The present Land Use By-law designates an Urban Expansion District which consists primarily of the lands between Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. Whereas the General Municipal Plan's "Urban Reserve" designation anticipated expansion of the two urban municipalities away from each other (Spruce Grove to the north, east and south; Stony Plain to the west and south), the "Urban Expansion District" of the Land Use By-law focuses on the Spruce Grove/Stony Plain Corridor. The two urban centres have expanded towards each other; in places, their boundaries are only one mile apart. This Corridor, presently being used for agriculture, is now the subject of an uncontested annexation application by the City of Spruce Grove.

The purpose of the "Urban Expansion District" is to "...allow the logical development within and adjacent to..." the existing hamlets, towns (including Stony Plain) and the City of Spruce Grove. Permitted Uses in this District are single


RGE. 1
RGE. 28
RGE. 27
RGE. 26
TWP. 54
TWP. 53
TWP. 52
TWP. 51
TWP. 50
CITY OF EDMONTON
CITY OF EDMONTON
MAP 5
FRINGE AREAS IN
THE COUNTY OF PARKLAND
Fringe Area based on The Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan, Policy 2.1
Overlapping Fringe Areas
Boundary of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region
N
Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission
RGE. 1
RGE. 28
RGE. 27
RGE. 26

family dwellings, extensive farming and pasture. Lot size is at the discretion of the County's Municipal Planning Commission. Discretionary Uses allowed in this District are "...any use compatible with or which forms a logical extension of adjacent land uses within the urban municipalities..." and the "... uses specified in a joint general plan adopted by the County and the adjoining municipality."

There is no Urban Expansion District designated in Devon's fringe area. The North Saskatchewan River and the heavy concentration of country residential development make urban expansion into Parkland an unlikely possibility.

Much of the land around Spruce Grove and Stony Plain consists of Class 1, 2 and 3 soils. This is one of the few areas of good agricultural land in the County. Most of Spruce Grove's fringe area outside the Urban Expansion District is designated Agricultural/Mixed Land Use. Only the south-west portion of Stony Plain's fringe is predominantly Agricultural/Mixed Use; the remainder of the fringe area is zoned for urban expansion or country residential use. The primary purpose of the Agricultural/Mixed Land Use District is "... to permit farming and agricultural activities associated generally with the production of crops, livestock, dairy products and pastureland..." There is a longer and more detailed list of Permitted and Discretionary Uses than is found in the three other rural land use by-laws.

There is some discrepancy between rural residential areas shown on the General Municipal Plan Development Potential Map and the Country Residential Districts as designated in the Land Use By-law. However, the Plan map is small-scale and somewhat out-of-date. Much of the existing and potential country residential development in the Spruce Grove/Stony Plain fringe areas is on poorer quality (Class 4 and higher) soils. In addition, there is a large country residential subdivision south of the two municipalities (on good agricultural land). Although Spruce Grove and Stony Plain have substantial areas of vacant land within their boundaries (sufficient for twice the population in the case of Spruce Grove and significantly more in Stony Plain), these country residential developments may eventually come into conflict with the nearby urban municipalities (for example, because of the provision of sewer and water services, the alignment of roads and the large lot sizes).

The County land included in Devon's 3.2 km interim fringe consists mainly of Class 5, 6 and 7 soils. Although some land is shown as Agriculture/Mixed Land Use Reserve on the General Municipal Plan's Development Potential Map, the Land Use By-law designates the land adjacent to the river as a Recreation District and the remainder as a Country Residential District. Because of the river barrier, Devon is not concerned about development in Parkland's portion of the urban fringe, except as it might affect the river and river banks through pollution, slumping, etc. Municipal staff feel the country residential development in Parkland benefits the Town since many of the rural residents north of the river play an active role in Devon's community and commercial life.

Devon does not participate in Tri-Council meetings. At these meetings, representatives from Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and the County of Parkland discuss

common interests such as land use, the Corridor, Highway 16X, protective services and solid waste management. Spruce Grove municipal staff are satisfied with the level of communication and the referral process between the City and the County. Stony Plain municipal staff feel that Parkland is very generous in notifying the Town of development proposals within eight kilometres of the urban boundary.

At the present time, the County has no joint general municipal plan with any of the urban municipalities. However, the County does recognize the need for joint consultation and co-operation. According to the County's Land Use By-law, the urban fringe "...comprises all that land in the municipality designated as urban fringe by the Regional Plan in effect for the area [the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan or the Yellowhead Regional Plan] unless otherwise designated through a Joint Agreement between the County and the incorporated municipality." The purpose of the urban fringe designation is to "...indicate areas that may be subject to joint consultation as required by the Regional Plan."

(d) Strathcona County

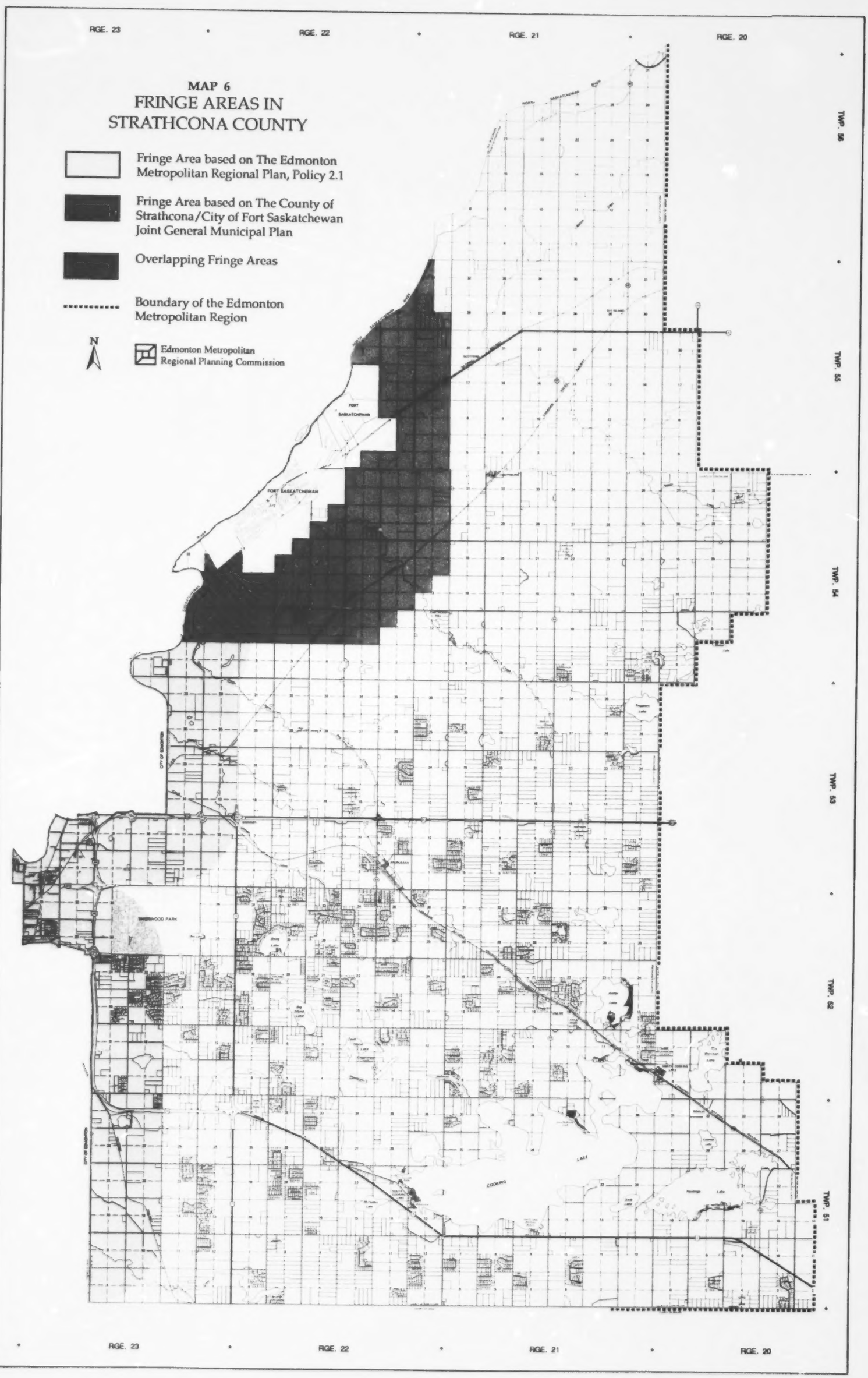
In many respects, the Strathcona County resembles a region such as Waterloo or Haldimand-Norfolk in Ontario or a municipality such as the Municipal District of Saanich in British Columbia. Strathcona County Council is the governing body for both rural and urban lands within its boundaries.

Strathcona is the only rural municipality in the Edmonton Region with an urban component to its General Municipal Plan and Land Use By-law. Like Waterloo and Saanich, the County has designated an urban service area boundary, which includes Sherwood Park, to distinguish which lands are or will be provided with an urban level of services. Unlike Waterloo and Saanich, the County has not used this urban service area boundary as a long term planning boundary.

Sherwood Park is an unincorporated hamlet. Therefore, the Regional Plan does not recognize an interim 3.2 km fringe around Sherwood Park. At the same time, this is the only hamlet in the Edmonton Region designated as an urban growth centre (Regional Plan Policy 1.1).

Within the Urban Service Area Boundary, the County's General Municipal Plan identifies residential and industrial expansion areas. Policies A.1.d) and A.1.e) encourage contiguous extension of existing residential development and appropriate "...interim agricultural land and non-permanent open space uses which do not prejudice future urban development." Policy A.4.h) lists appropriate interim land uses for industrial expansion areas. Policy A.e.(a)(iii) prohibits local industrial uses in areas subject to urban expansion.

Two urban municipalities - Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan - have fringe areas extending into the County (Map 6). The County's General Municipal Plan includes both general and specific fringe area policies. Policy D.2.b) permits "...a range of land uses in the urban/rural fringe or other suitable locations, including but not limited to suburban estates, conventional and new forms of country residential,


RGE. 23
RGE. 22
RGE. 21
RGE. 20
TWP. 56
TWP. 55
TWP. 54
TWP. 53
TWP. 52
TWP. 51
MAP 6
FRINGE AREAS IN
STRATHCONA COUNTY
Fringe Area based on The Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan, Policy 2.1
Fringe Area based on The County of Strathcona/City of Fort Saskatchewan Joint General Municipal Plan
Overlapping Fringe Areas
Boundary of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region
N
Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission
FORT SASKATCHEWAN
SHERWOOD PARK
COOKING LAKE

small holdings, small farm and large parcel rural residential uses as well as compatible and supportive small scale local commercial and local industrial uses." Policy D.4 is concerned with preservation "...of future urban expansion areas...in accordance with their existing use and long term potential."

Fort Saskatchewan and the County have the only joint general municipal plan in the Edmonton Region. General Municipal Plan Policy C.1 exempts the area under the provisions of the joint general municipal plan from the provisions of the County's General Municipal Plan. Policy E.4 requires a review of the joint general municipal plan by the Joint Planning Committee in light of policies in the more recent General Municipal Plan.

As a rural municipality, Strathcona is also concerned with agricultural land. One objective of the General Municipal Plan states that:

> "(a) Better agricultural lands (Canada Land Inventory Class 1 - 3) shall be protected, where appropriate, for agricultural and compatible uses, or uses that would not prohibit future agricultural uses."

Section E - Agricultural Area - includes policies on "first parcels out," physically severed parcels and eighty-acre splits. Intensive agricultural uses are not to be allowed where they may conflict with adjacent uses.

Much of the land in the Edmonton interim fringe has been designated in the County's Land Use By-law as Agricultural. Permitted Uses within this District are one family dwellings, intensive agricultural operations, single wide or double wide mobile homes, modular homes and accessory buildings and uses. Immediately south of Sherwood Park, approximately four sections within the Edmonton fringe are zoned for country residential development. Some of the existing development predates the Regional Plan. The unsubdivided portions outside the provincially designated Restricted Development Area are zoned for country residential infill.

That portion of Sherwood Park which lies within 3.2 kms of the City of Edmonton's boundary is also considered part of the fringe area, and therefore subject to fringe area policies, despite the fact that Sherwood Park is one of the largest urban areas in Alberta. This situation exists because Sherwood Park is not an incorporated urban municipality like St. Albert or Leduc. Rather, it is a hamlet which is still a part of the rural municipality of Strathcona County. However, Regional Plan policies recognize Sherwood Park as an urban entity and in most cases group Sherwood Park and the urban municipalities together as far as the application of regional policy is concerned.

Sherwood Park has historically been defined by its urban services area boundary, and most of this area is designated in the County's G.M.P. for residential, industrial, commercial and other urban uses. A recent County amendment to the GMP to permit residential uses in an area hitherto designated for industrial purposes created problems as the area concerned was less than 3 km from

Edmonton's future heavy industrial area. The concern was that by developing residential areas too close to the City's heavy industrial area, the County may be imposing limitations on the types of heavy industry which could potentially locate in the area. This issue, which might possibly have been avoided through joint planning, has been referred to the Alberta Planning Board as a dispute.

The County of Strathcona No. 20/City of Fort Saskatchewan Joint General Municipal Plan is currently being questioned as the two municipalities have recently undergone a lengthy battle over annexation. Up to this point, the City's municipal staff had considered the joint planning process advantageous to both municipalities. Communication and consultation between the City and the County was greatly improved, an urban expansion area and a fringe area were identified, a conceptual land use map was prepared, issues were identified and policies were formulated concerning annexation, urban expansion area, land use, transportation, economic development planning, joint public services and conservation.

The Joint General Municipal Plan was an attempt to create, if not a "win/win" situation between the City and the County, at least a situation where the losses were planned for and accepted. Plan policies were meant to:

(i) clarify each municipality's position with respect to future land use and annexation;

(ii) designate urban expansion areas to reduce uncertainty about the future;

(iii) make provision for compensating the County for losses of municipal capital investments and taxation revenue resulting from annexation;

(iv) protect viable agricultural operations for as long as possible; and

(v) establish a referral procedure.

The recent annexation conflict appears to have arisen because of different interpretations of Joint General Municipal Plan policies.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following are observations and conclusions based on the responses to questionnaires on rural/urban fringe issues.

1. No area - rural or urban - exists in isolation. Every urban centre, regardless of size or status, has some impact on the surrounding rural lands; what occurs in the surrounding rural lands affects an urban centre. The degree of impact and the potential for conflict depends to a large extent on jurisdiction over the rural/urban interface.

2. Because of this rural/urban interdependence, when more than one jurisdiction is involved, at the very least there is the need for rural/urban communication and co-operation. A second solution is joint rural/urban planning of adjacent rural/urban lands. Another possibility involves co-ordination of planning (growth, development and servicing) at the regional level.

   Co-ordinated planning at the provincial or state level seems best suited to:

   (a) relatively small areas (e.g. Prince Edward Island); or

   (b) planning concerns of provincial (or state) significance (e.g. prime agricultural land, provincial forest reserves, energy resources, rivers).

3. The more complex the region, the harder it is to resolve conflicts between rural areas and urban centres. The more complex the region, the more important it is to have an overall planning strategy which includes both urban and rural areas.

4. A regional plan or regional development strategy, if it lacks authority, is ineffective, since all parties must voluntarily agree to follow its guidelines. These guidelines will not always coincide with local perceptions of local "best interests."

5. There are regional concerns that cannot be effectively dealt with at the local level because:

   (a) the resource is non-renewable and of more than local significance (e.g. good agricultural land, energy resources, sand and gravel);

   (b) the facilities or resources cross jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. roads, pipelines, powerlines, railways, rivers and lakes);

   (c) the impacts affect more than one municipality (e.g. waste management, air pollution, heavy industrial development);

   (d) the resource may be more important to an adjacent municipality than to the "host" municipality (e.g. recreation and open space lands); and

   (e) the perception of an area's or resource's "usefulness" varies because of various economic, social, cultural, physical or environmental factors (e.g. forests, environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife habitat).

6. Rural areas and urban areas have different roles to play. The degree of difference varies with time, with place and with perceptions. Generally speaking, rural areas are associated with agriculture, with agricultural-related industry and with rural residential uses. Urban areas are associated with high density residential, institutional, recreational, commercial and (though not always) industrial development.

7. Based on information provided by regional planning agencies, the clearest distinction between "urban" and "rural" would appear to be related to utility servicing. Urban

areas are provided with common, urban levels of servicing; rural areas depend on individual, private servicing.

8. Because of the nature and land requirements of agricultural operations, agriculture and urban development may conflict. Rural/urban conflicts can be reduced when prime agricultural lands are clearly designated and strongly defended by a higher level (regional, provincial/state or federal) government.

9. The preservation of good agricultural land is ultimately a provincial (or state), if not a federal, concern. Some provinces and states have attempted to control agricultural land preservation at the provincial or state level.

10. The term "rural/urban fringe" may be too narrow a term. If the fringe is related to jurisdictional boundaries, then in areas where rural and urban lands are under one jurisdiction, there would be no rural/urban fringe. Yet, regardless of whether a rural/urban fringe is recognized, wherever rural land uses and urban land uses meet, there are real or potential problems (related, for example, to the loss of agricultural land through urban expansion).

11. The Edmonton Metropolitan Region has several advantages over many other regions.

    (a) The Region was settled more recently than, for example, much of Central Canada, and has had an opportunity to observe what can happen when over-all, co-ordinated planning is lacking.

    (b) The Planning Act, R.S.A., 1980, requires all local statutory plans and by-laws to conform to the Regional Plan.

    (c) The need for co-ordinated planning at a regional level is becoming increasingly apparent to the municipalities in the Region.

    (d) There is an overall spirit of co-operation, despite local rivalries and competition for development.

    (e) Inter-municipal co-ordination of activities and services, such as recreation and protective services, is increasing through intermunicipal agreements.

    (f) There is an increasing reliance on regional servicing commissions for water, sewage, and solid waste disposal.

    (g) Most urban boundaries are clearly defined and contain sufficient urban land for long-term urban growth.

    (h) There are still large areas of good agricultural land, under agricultural conservation policies at the local and regional levels.

12. There are also negative aspects to the present situation in the Edmonton Region:

(a) Urban municipalities are located wholly or partly on good agricultural land; the Regional Plan exerts stronger control over subdivision on good agricultural land outside incorporated urban boundaries.

(b) According to an Environment Council of Alberta report, there are few comprehensive provincial policies (other than a general guideline for country residential development) relating to subdivision and development on good agricultural land.

(c) There is no clear definition of "rural" and "urban". Although many Regional Plan policies distinguish between urban and rural municipalities, the policies provide guidelines only; the actual policy implementation depends on the attitude and circumstances of each municipality.

The distinction between "urban" and "rural" cannot be based on jurisdictional boundaries, since rural municipalities have urban development and urban municipalities contain agricultural lands. The distinction cannot be based on servicing, since regional utility services and regional planning are not co-ordinated to any great extent. The distinction cannot be based on perceptions, since some urban municipalities have a more "protective" attitude towards farmland than some rural municipalities. Some small urban municipalities have little interest in urban growth or attracting development, while the rural County of Strathcona considers itself as an "urban county" and tends to be growth oriented.

(d) There is strong competition for non-residential (especially industrial) development since municipal revenue depends on tax assessment. As long as each municipality must rely on tax revenues within its own boundaries, there will be competition - and the potential for conflict - in the Region. "Spillover" benefits from development in an adjacent municipality may not be sufficient to offset "spillover" liabilities.

Although competition is a regional issue, it is intensified in fringe areas since:

(i) most industries in rural areas - other than resource extraction and some agricultural support industries - are attracted to lands close to urban centres;

(ii) "spillover" liabilities (pollution, traffic problems, etc.) in the fringe can affect adjacent municipalities; and

(iii) in its efforts to attract non-residential development, a municipality may permit lower development standards, which, in turn, may have an impact on adjacent municipalities, both urban and rural.

(e) The most controversial annexation conflicts in the Region have involved the Metropolitan Industrial Areas in fringe areas; this is the result of:

(i) the amount of tax revenue generated;

(ii) the proximity of the industrial development to urban municipal boundaries and the perception that this constitutes unfair competition with urban industrial areas;

(iii) the wide range of developments permitted in the MIAs; and

(iv) the perception, on the part of some urban municipalities, that industrial development in rural municipalities is not as well controlled as it would have to be if it were located within an urban boundary.

(f) At the present time, there is little perceived need for formal joint rural/urban planning. The present Regional Plan policies are generally considered satisfactory while other planning and development matters have a higher priority. This situation could change if an upsurge in the economy led to renewed urban growth and increased industrial activity.

(g) There is a lack of co-ordination between regional servicing and regional land use planning. Regional sewage, water, transportation and land use planning are all under separate governmental or quasi-governmental agencies.

(h) At the present time, the Regional Plan provides guidelines but has no control over servicing, transportation and waste management; has subdivision control over good agricultural land in rural areas; and has an advisory role with respect to natural resource extraction, environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife habitat, recreation and open space areas and heavy industrial development.

(i) There is a deep-seated antipathy towards regional government and therefore a distrust of anything that suggests regional control. While the need for, and benefits of, regional planning have been recognized (perhaps more so now than previously), the tradition of local autonomy is very strongly adhered to. Stronger regional powers are viewed as a threat to local autonomy.

13. Because of the independent nature of each municipality in the Edmonton Region, no regional plan or growth management strategy is likely to be effective unless it:

(a) has strong support from the municipalities and can therefore achieve a large degree of consensus, and

(b) is firmly backed by Provincial Authority.

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In addition, numerous plans, studies, papers and excerpts from same were included in the responses from regional planning agencies.

APPENDIX A

THE PLANNING ACT, R.S.A., 1980
IMPLICATIONS FOR FRINGE AREA PLANNING

SECTION	SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FRINGE AREA PLANNING
26(3) and (4)	- establishes the responsibilities of a regional planning commission (planning in the rural/urban fringe).
47	- establishes the purpose of a regional plan: (a) to provide for the present and future land use and development of the planning region, and (b) if required, to regulate and control the use and development of land in the planning region.
54(1) and (2)	- requires conformity of by-laws, statutory plans, development, replotting, etc., with the regional plan (including fringe area policies of the regional plan).
44	- establishes a procedure (referral to the Local Authorities Board) to handle inter-municipal disputes involving statutory plans or land use by-laws (such disputes usually relate to fringe area planning and development).
28(1)	- allows for the establishment of a joint municipal planning commission (one method of rural/urban co-operation in fringe area planning and development).
29(3)	- allows a municipal or joint municipal planning commission to act as a development officer (which allows joint rural/urban decisions regarding fringe area development).
32	- allows a Council, municipal planning commission or joint municipal planning commission to act as a subdivision approving authority (control of subdivision in the fringe area).
87	- establishes which persons or agencies can act as a subdivision approving authority (which gives a council, a municipal or joint-municipal planning commission, the regional planning commission, or a committee or director of the regional planning commission control of subdivision in the fringe area).
91	- sets out requirements for subdivision approval (control of subdivision in the fringe area).

78	- limits the number of dwelling units on a lot (development in fringe areas, especially where subdivision is restricted).
61(1) and (2)	- gives Council the authority to prepare a general municipal plan (this plan normally indicates future land use and directions of growth, which directly impacts on the rural/urban fringe).
61(3)	- gives two or more councils authority to prepare a joint general municipal plan (one means of rural/urban municipal co-operation in fringe area planning).
63	- establishes the purposes of a general municipal plan (which may include directions of future growth and some indication of land uses proposed for future expansion areas outside existing boundaries).
64, 65, and 67	- gives authority for, and describes the purpose of, area structure plans and area redevelopment plans (which may involve areas in the rural/urban fringe).
68	- gives Council authority to adopt a land use by-law (the primary method of controlling land use and development in fringe areas).
69(1)	- establishes the purpose of a land use by-law which "... may prohibit or regulate and control the use and development of land and buildings within a municipality" (control of fringe area development).
69(2)	- establishes the contents of a land use by-law (land use districts, permitted and discretionary uses and residential densities in fringe areas).
71	- gives Council authority to prescribe, for each land use district, the permitted and discretionary uses (control of land use and development in the fringe).
124(3) and (4)	- gives Council authority to prepare and implement a replotting scheme (which may be necessary when an area changes from rural to urban, for example, by annexation).

APPENDIX B

Letter to regional planning agencies
requesting information on the rural/urban fringe

6955-1

November 8, 1989

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: The Rural/Urban Fringe

In the near future, the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission will be reviewing the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Plan. Among the policies to be reviewed are those dealing with Fringe Area Planning.

The existing Regional Plan Policies establish and define an interim fringe area as ". . . those lands in a rural municipality lying within 3.2 km (2.0 miles) of a corporate urban boundary." However, the policies emphasize that this is an interim measure; municipalities are encouraged to establish, through joint consultation, ". . . appropriate boundaries for Fringe Areas."

Over the years, a number of problems have arisen in the Edmonton region as a result of land use and development in fringe areas. In hopes of resolving some of these problems and preventing others, we would be interested in learning about the experiences of other municipalities and agencies. Therefore, we would appreciate it if you would provide us with some information on fringe areas.

In your area or region:

1. What constitutes a Fringe Area, or, alternatively, how is the Fringe Area defined?

2. How is development in your urban fringe areas controlled?

3. What are the major issues or problems associated with your fringe area(s) (e.g. land use conflicts, restrictions on urban expansion, loss of prime agricultural land, absence of joint planning by urban and rural municipalities)?

4. Do the issues tend to relate to a particular type of land use (e.g. country residential) or to development in general?

5. How are these problems or issues being resolved (e.g. joint planning and consultation, regional plan policy, local statutory plans and land use by-laws etc.)?

Because of our tight schedule on this project, it would be appreciated if you could send us your reply before April 11, 1989. Any additional comments or opinions will also be welcomed.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours truly

Peter Dickson, M.C.I.P.
Manager
Strategic Planning Branch

PW/ak

APPENDIX C

Survey questions on the rural/urban fringe
(used as a basis for discussions with municipal staff
of Edmonton Metropolitan Region municipalities)

URBAN

1. What do you consider to be the rural/urban fringe around your municipality?

2. Are you aware of what types of development exist or are proposed within this fringe?

3. What types of development do you feel should be allowed in the fringe? What types of development should be prohibited?

4. Are you notified of all developments that occur in this fringe? If not, for which developments do you receive notice?

5. Are you informed of any major statutory plans or land use by-law amendments affecting the fringe that could affect your municipality?

6. Do you see any advantages to a joint G.M.P.? Disadvantages?

7. If you were involved in preparing a joint G.M.P., how would you determine what area(s) should be covered by the Plan?

8. The present Regional Plan establishes a 3.2 km (2.0 mile) interim fringe area boundary around urban centres. Do you feel this is sufficient for your future needs?

9. From your point of view, what issues or problems exist in your fringe area?

10. Are there any fringe area issues you feel are unique to your municipality?

11. Can you suggest any solutions to the problems outlined?

12. How do the fringe area policies of the Regional Plan affect your fringe area?

RURAL

1. How would you define the rural/urban fringe?

2. What types of development do you feel should be allowed in the fringe? What types of development do you feel should be prohibited?

3. Do you notify an urban municipality when a development is proposed in the fringe area? If not, why?

4. Does/Do the urban municipality(ies) notify you of any development that could have an impact on your municipality?

5. Are you informed of any urban statutory plan or land use by-law amendment affecting the fringe that could also affect your municipality?

6. Do you see any advantages to a joint G.M.P.? Disadvantages?

7. If you were involved in preparing a joint G.M.P., how would you determine what area(s) should be covered by the Plan?

8. The present Regional Plan establishes an interim 3.2 km (2.0 mile) fringe area boundary around urban centres. Do you feel this is excessive in some or most cases?

9. From your point of view, what issues or problems exist in your fringe area?

10. Are there any fringe area issues you feel are unique to your municipality?

11. Can you suggest any solutions to the problems outlined?

12. How do the fringe area policies of the Regional Plan affect the fringe areas in your municipality?